JOSHUA SOULE

METHODIST FOUNDERS' SERIES

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LIFE OF JOSHUA SOULE

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THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE illustrious man whose life story is written through the pages of this volume expired on March 6, 1867, now somewhat more than three and forty years ago. There has been no time since his death that his biography was not a desideratum. As a testimony to the truth and power of Christianity, the orderly record of such a life could not but have a large use. The secular community is entitled to be put in possession of the facts attending the manifestation of so marked a personality. The inspirational value of his example to young men of serious moods and living ideals is too considerable to be determined by the ordinary means of reckoning. To the great religious body with which he was identified—a cardinal and ever-expanding force in the life of the republic—the record of his words and choosings is of surpassing significance. In his proper and historic person he represents a large element of the past of the Methodist Church in the South and is a deathless pledge of the purposefulness and sincerity of its future. Nor is this view of the serviceableness of the book of his deeds a recent discovery; it is a view that has been held since the day on which he was caught away from the sight of his people.

Why, then, has his story remained so long unwritten? Nobody is better qualified than this writer to say that the august subject itself is one calculated to deter the most confident, nor would this pen have attempted on its own initiative a theme so high; only in obedience to an official command has it been dipped in these

ethereal fires. As the reader pursues the narrative through its course of nearly a century, other reasons why this service was not undertaken by an earlier biographer will appear. It is not necessary that these reasons be mentioned here. But perhaps the chief deterrent for these nearly fifty years past has been the ever-remembered interdict which the great rabbi himself published to posterity. Stronger than the sentiment of a whole nation, stronger than its wish and judgment as to what is fit, have been the words which guard in their provincial rest the bones of the great Shakespeare. In his climacteric utterance before the General Conference of 1844—an utterance whose force was to stamp meaning and potency upon an epoch now but fairly begun—Bishop Soule said: "I want no man to write my epitaph. I will write it myself. I want no man to write and publish my life. I will do that myself so far as I think it may be necessary for the interests of posterity or for the benefit of the Church of God." Bold indeed had been the contemporary or near contemporary who could so far construe that injunction into the fine frenzy of a moment of haste as to enter unauthorized upon an ordering of the deeds and days of that self-administered life. But there came a time when, under the urgency of the General Conference, Bishop Soule so far modified the terms of his interdict as to consent to have his story told as a side light to that of his long-departed coadjutor, Bishop McKendree. When, however, the biographer elect faltered before the uninitiated task, he, for his part and with unconcealed satisfaction, canceled the obligation, leaving the injunction undissolved.

But the time has come, lest much fair fruit of truth and faith, much grace and loyalty and courage, much glory of Christly manhood perish in oblivion—the time has come that the details of this life, so far as they can be recovered, should be set in orderly array. This I have sought with industry, patience, and, I trust, a becoming reverence to do; and I have been at almost every stage of my investigation pleased to find that the materials to be commanded were more abundant than I had been led to expect. Some of the facts and documents which I have been able to retrieve from imminent oblivion and introduce into this narrative as parts of its vital substance are of the greatest value to the Church, and I confidently believe will be of lasting interest to the students of Methodist history. The Church whose servant I have humbly conceived myself to be in an especial sense in this work must find in the history of its greatest Bishop, though but too imperfectly written here, a character the completeness of whose self-confirmatory testimony has been but half suspected, as also an incentive that can but largely affect its future plans and spirit.

Again protesting a sense of insufficiency that has burdened me through all the months in which I have been employed in this work, I submit it to the judgment of my brethren and to the household of the people called Methodists and, indeed, to those of every household who seek for that which is kingly in human flesh.

H. M. Du Bose.

April 15, 1910.

LIFE OF JOSHUA SOULE.

CHAPTER I.

The Sea King Race.

Heraldries in general are assets of doubtful appraisement, but are not without consideration, even in republics. The disposition to improvise an ancestry, or else to improve the one in hand until it reaches a desired rank, is so nearly universal that one is justified in counting it a human trait. America, no less than the Old World, has its points of starting out in this matter. Legion is the name of the genealogical romances that refer to the stocks of the Pilgrims and the Cavaliers, and not without temptation and reason. Rugged, humanlike, and yet unworldly on the one part and high-born, humanlike, and honor-loving on the other were those Plymouth and Virginia forbears who verily did begin to people the wilderness and the lines of whose descendants run to-day through the augmenting American multitudes like veins of silver through the rocks.

Amongst the names of "the forty-one male passengers and heads of families" that came over in the Mayflower appears that of George Soule, as may be seen by any one who consults the list of those worthies preserved at Plymouth. From this George Soule descended a numerous progeny represented not only in many parts of New England, but in almost every section of the republic. The individuals of this descent are said

to be marked everywhere by a striking family likeness, the persistence of some far-off ethnic type. Bishop Joshua Soule was a lineal descendant of the Pilgrim father. The village in the low-lying shore lands of Maine where the great Methodist leader was born was scarcely two days' sail from the sandy beach where the feet of his Pilgrim ancestor first touched the soil of America.

The early New England race of Soules were sea kings—skippers of whaling and fishing vessels or masters of merchant ships that braved the mid-Atlantic. The second generation settled about the shores of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Island, in the open face of the surf. They took to the sea as by instinct. The spray was in their hair, and the salt was in their blood. The deep was their affinity. Their very virtues were oceanlike—resistless, unconfined. Courage and candor were in their hearts. On the sea they welcomed the storm, and on the land they turned not back from any purpose or enterprise.

The persistence of the seafaring life in the choice of their generations was not fortuity, nor is the reference of their physical and temperamental qualities to the blood and heredity of the sea kings either fanciful or accommodated. The Soules of both the South of Scotland and North of England, dwellers about the Tweed, as well as those of France, were Normans of the Normans. Their ancestral blood ran red in the veins of those viking lords through whose prowess Rollo, the Norwegian, in the tenth century established himself on the northern shores of France. From Rollo and his vikings were descended those mighty dukes and their

feudal lords who conquered England and gave to it new blood and the capacity for a new faith. It was from the midriff of one of Rollo's Vikings that the race of the Soules was sprung. The love of the sea and its mysteries and the longing for lands unknown which enticed to adventure the pagan sires enticed their Christian sons to seek in many lands the goal of liberty and freedom of thought.

The very name of Soule is an echo of the sagas, new and old. Its root is the true Norse word *sjö,* or *sö,* the equivalent of the English *sea,* "the moving, restless one," to which root has also been conjecturally referred the English word *soul.* Here is a lineage that loses itself amongst the sons of Woden, a race tree as ancient and mysterious as Ygdrasil itself.

As to the true spelling and pronunciation of the name, there was confusion even in England just before the Cromwellian period. The spelling on the Plymouth list is *Sowle.* In France the name is a word of two syllables and accented on the final letter. At an early time in Normandy the name was spelled *Soulis,* which was no doubt the original form; but to-day it is met in the capital and other cities about the Seine as *Soulé.* A brother of the Bishop, who removed from New England to the West in advance of his more distinguished kinsman, replaced the Gallic accent, and his descendants continue to be known by the name of Soulé. The Bishop in his later years was known to be sensitive concerning this reversion to precedent, and stoutly insisted that, so far as regarded his own name, the Plymouth rule of pronunciation should apply.

In Stubbs's "Chronicle of the Reigns of Edward

First and Edward Second" is given a particular account of Sir John Soulis, "who belonged to one of those Anglo-Norman families who settled in Scotland in the reign of Malcolm III." This thirteenth century link in the chain of the modern Bishop's family was cast in a rude but heroic mold. He was the compeer and accomplice of the Baliols, the Bruces, the Lords of Hastings and their great clan barons, who in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries played between the kings of England and France the games of diplomacy and war, with the crown and kingdom of Scotland as a stake. By turns Sir John was a diplomat and a soldier of fortune; and not a few were the freebooting enterprises which he undertook along the border and on the seas, thus showing himself to be a veritable viking of the later age. Though a natural ally of the Scottish king, John Baliol, he was sometimes in the employ of the English sovereign Edward I., and yet at other times on missions for the king of France; but he habitually sought those enterprises which had in them the elements of adventure and daring. Appointed by King John to be coguardian with John Comyn, of Scotland, while the king was in exile of war, he assumed all but regal power and began to treat with the court of Rome against the English. To further his designs he took the sea on an embassy to France, and soon the ships of England were scouring the Channel in search of him and his companions. He was thus for a time the disturber, if not the dictator, of Europe. Though baffled in the effort to realize his vast schemes, the latent Norse instinct of his nature led him to continue the feudatory strife along the Scottish border.

Later his name became terrible as a foeman amongst the inhabitants of the English shires. Finally he joined himself to Edward Bruce, a younger brother of King Robert Bruce, who early in the fourteenth century led a sea expedition to Ireland and had himself proclaimed king in the north of that island. In a great battle at Dundalk, which recalled "the last great battle" of Arthur with the Picts in Cornwall, the prince and his Norman ally perished side by side.

Such was the militant human stuff, as here glimpsed, which under Puritan tutelage helped to make effective the challenge of civilization to the American wilderness and which also contributed to swell the ranks of the Ironsides of Cromwell in the contest with tyranny.

In George Soule, the Mayflower Pilgrim, Celtic sturdiness mingled with the passion and restlessness of the men of the fiords. Behind him lay a long family and racial history of which he recked nothing, but from whose vital drifts were fed the enthusiasm and purpose which made both him and his later son immortal in the New World. The extraordinary personality of Joshua Soule, especially as expressed in his temperamental habits and intellectual processes, is understandable only in the light of his racial descent. Greatness does not always succeed greatness from sire to son, but greatness of mind and spirit, as also that ethereal fiber so nearly mind and spirit, invariably spring from ancestral greatness, near or remote. Like only can beget like.

As we have seen, the early descendants of George Soule drifted southward from the first Pilgrim settlement at Plymouth to the region of Cape Cod, Martha's

Vineyard, and Nantucket, which were the seats of the early New England fisheries. It was from this section of Massachusetts that the first white population of Maine was chiefly drawn, and thus is explained the presence of the Soules amongst the hardy and adventurous pioneer settlers of the Pine Tree State. Maine was from the beginning the most romantic, as it was the most backward in development, of all the divisions of the English colonial coastwise territory in North America. The early explorers visited its shores. Corte Real, in 1501, more than a century before the settlements made at Jamestown and Plymouth, made a map of its coast and islands. Sir John Hawkins and other scarcely less renowned sea rovers cruised in the waters of its bay. The English and the French vied with each other during the early part of the seventeenth century in efforts to secure control of the region through colonization. Sir Humphrey Gilbert lost his life in an enterprise meant to acquire it for the English crown in the days of Elizabeth. Mount Desert Island, with its towering coasts and its nests of inland peaks, enticed the French Jesuits, who planted a community there in 1613, but who were shortly afterwards ejected by the English. Thus the land remained in Protestant hands.

In 1677 the colonial government of Massachusetts bought up the various royal titles to lands in the Maine country and made it a tributary of the colony under the name of the "Province of Maine." From that time, or as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century, Massachusetts began to give from her own too sparse populations handfuls of settlers for the indented coasts

and narrow valleys of the new territory. As before seen, these immigrants were chiefly from the southeast of the old colony, and were the very flower of the Puritan stock.

Captain Joshua Soule, the father of Bishop Soule, was bred to the life of a seaman, being first a common sailor, then the master of a whaler, and later the chief officer of a merchant ship. His vessel seems to have been, like most of the craft of the times, a rover, sailing to and fro and from such points as offered the readiest cargoes. His range was from the coasts of his own country to the Carolinas and the Bahamas, with possibly a rare visit to the eastern shores of the Atlantic. Nevertheless, he had his homing times, and often enjoyed long intervals on land. He had married and early established a home at Bristol, on the coast of Maine, where his fifth son, the future bishop, was born on August 1, 1781, just as the tide of victory was turning toward the American patriots in their struggle for independence.

In addition to the Bristol home, Captain Soule had, while yet engaged in seafaring pursuits, acquired a farm, or tract of virgin land, at Avon, a small settlement on the Sandy River, within the eastern reaches of the Province of Maine. It does not appear that this land was originally secured with a view to making it a homestead, but one of those providences by which the plans and oversight of Heaven are manifested caused the sea captain to turn to it as at once an asylum and a means of subsistence.

But for the Revolutionary War he would in all likelihood have continued to be a sea dog to the end of his

days. The letters of marque granted by Great Britain during the war with her colonies had the effect of driving the infant commerce of America from the seas. As early as 1775 the British fleet attacked and destroyed Portland and Falmouth, the principal ports of Maine, and thus practically blockaded the entire coast. During this naval foray the ship of Captain Soule was either captured or destroyed or else rendered worthless, and thus his seafaring days ended. He very soon thereafter formed the purpose of removing himself and his family to the virgin estate which he had acquired in the Sandy Valley, and there become a tiller of the soil.

The radical character of that turn of fortune was truly suggestive of an active and instant providence, could the matter-of-fact old seaman have read it out. Perhaps he did not desire to read it out: his faith was centered in the Calvinism of Calvin, the fatalism of unsearchable decrees. He had eaten of that bread too long to inquire curiously of Providence. By his faith he walked; and it was well that he could so walk, for there was in that hard day no chance that another might break on his path.

But whatever their interpretation of the fortune compelling their journey northward toward a new and unfamiliar home, the movers found the way a pleasant one. It led along by the broad-waved lower Kennebec into the birch-darkened highlands, and by the shores of glassy and picturesque lakes until they reached their land of promise far away from the sea and the low-lying shores they had known. It may be that this call of the sea captain to the virgin wild lost

to the sea, in the person of his youngest son, a hearty mariner and possibly a future admiral; but it gave to the Church an illustrious leader and bishop.

Joshua and Mary Soule, the parents of Bishop Soule, were both religious, having been brought up in the strict Presbyterian doctrine. In the spirit and letter of their devotion they reproduced the religious life of their Scottish border ancestry. The Rev. Mr. McLain, the pastor under whose care they were for a long while, was a man who, it seems from the little we know of him, was calculated to confirm them in the fundamentals of the faith of the Covenanters. Their Calvinism may even have been accentuated by the primitive and isolated conditions of their life in the new lands of Maine, where their sons—and particularly the youngest—grew from childhood to youth. A strict family discipline was maintained. Sabbath-keeping, family prayers, and catechism-learning were the more prominent outward tests of the faith in which the sea captain and his wife sought to rear their sons. These were not different from the tests demanded by the more prevalent school of Calvinism, represented in the Congregational Churches about them. The conformity and ethical order expressed by this rote challenged the respect of the world, if it did not compel to love and obedience.

Young Joshua was the child of his parents, quiet, determined, and religious by instinct and in the absolute commitment of his thoughts. They taught him to fear the Lord, and he responded to their teaching. They emphasized the literal call which faith made upon that fear, and he accepted the emphasis. The credal

picture of the divine sovereignty all but shut out from his childish eyes the face of the Father. But the fear which bulked through his religious thoughts was a restraining fear—doubly so: it not only restrained from active disobedience, but it restrained the emotions and those subliminal feelings whose healthy play is so necessary to the experiences of true godliness. If it did not "cast out" perfect love, it at least made it impossible. It saved from the letter of sin, but it did not deliver into the grace of rejoicing.

The Soule home in the Avon settlement, which was in an unfurnished condition when the family removed to it in the autumn of 1781, was a plain structure, provided with only the simplest comforts; but the personalities of Captain Soule and his wife gave it an exceptional importance in the whole region. It was a home for the ministers of the Presbyterian faith, who kept a more or less constant oversight of the valley settlements. Occasionally they preached in the Soule home, but it does not appear that they ever organized a congregation in those parts. Not only the rustic son of the ex-sea captain, but the whole land about awaited the coming of one who should cry in the wilderness an effectual call.

More primitive conditions than those which surrounded the settlers at Avon could not well be imagined. Only ten years before the arrival of the Soules the first plowshare had been let into the soil. The place was remote, and recruits had come in slowly. Markets were distant, and in such as could be reached the demand for the products of the farm was small; but the soil was fertile and yielded readily cereals,

fruits, and vegetables. The roaring rivulets turned the mill wheel, and the housewives spun flax and wool, and so the necessary demands upon the outer world were reduced to the minimum.

One of the very few reminiscences of his early life left by the Bishop gives us a picture of the Sandy River farm and the furrowed field over which he went and came season after season. Like Virgil, he retained throughout his years a love for the farm. The smell of lands newly plowed and the breath of freshly mown meadows were grateful to his nostrils. While in venerable age and enjoying the reverence and all but the homage of the people of the South he was accustomed to give much personal care to the cultivation of the garden which constituted a goodly part of his modest Tennessee estate.

The record is that young Soule, like Asbury, "never uttered an oath" and was otherwise singularly correct in word and life. This led his more worldly companions to dub him "the deacon," a title which in that day in New England had an aptness not now so apparent. Beyond a doubt there is ground for belief in what has been termed "the genius for godliness." Grace has constantly found lives of exceptional responsiveness. Prenatal impulses, occult mental forces, and, above all, the selection of divine destiny explain these miracles in the barren commonplaces of humanity. The lad of Avon belonged to the virgin chivalry of the Apocalypse. But not only were the religious rules and discipline of the Soule family restraining and to a degree spiritualizing; both the parents were people of education, and probably possessed a literary taste much

superior to the average of those about them. The father, if he had not seen the world widely and deeply, had seen it from many view-points, and that through the eyes of both youth and manhood. He had had experience enough and his education was equal to the demand of some purely intellectual undertaking, had there been one inviting him. The mother had been brought up in a center of politeness and good manners. Measured by the times, she must have been a woman of good education. Nor did these parents, in their lack of fortune and the absence of schools, leave their children to absorb knowledge by uncertain processes. Early teaching in the home was resorted to. It is the Bishop's own testimony that he could not remember when he learned to read. Books such as the means of the family and the times afforded were provided. Of course the Bible was the Book which the boy most constantly read and which was constantly read aloud in the family; yet others, if still of titles and trend severe, were supplied. Beyond a peradventure, stories of the sea and tales of daring and adventure were not wholly wanting. The father was a good story-teller, and through his knowledge of many places and many seas he made his sons familiar beyond their natural chance with the world at large.

Quickly upon the catechism, the primers, and the storybooks must have followed, in the case of the young Joshua, more advanced studies and those representing his own literary electicism. The course of reading pursued by him in youth and adolescence was, as evidenced by his after culture, of most solid and thought-provoking character. The man who at the

age of twenty-seven wrote the Constitution of Methodism and might have written the Constitution of the commonwealth or held any one of its portfolios of State was no sciolist or pretender in thought and logic. Ten years after writing the Constitution he was set the even more difficult task of beginning the creation of a periodical Methodist literature. This work he accomplished, laying the foundations of Methodist journalism—the beginning of its magazine and newspaper publications—in a way creditable to himself and the fraternity which he served. To this may be added the testimony of Bishop McTyeire, who informs us "that from 1828 to 1844 the writing of every quadrennial Episcopal Address was devolved on him." Dr. Thomas O. Summers, a man to whom Methodist thought and literature are indebted, and who knew intimately the later years of Bishop Soule, bears unstinted testimony to the greatness and correctness of his thought and to his power and grace of expression. Measured by every standard, the intellectual greatness of this man was beyond question. And yet—the marvel grows!—he was never a day in college; nor did he receive at any time, except from his parents, other literary training than that given during brief months in a back-country school in Maine while yet an unorganized province of Massachusetts. In tracing the story of the intellectual development and mastery of this man we are to see again a demonstration of the propulsive power derived by the intellect from the experiences that follow the new birth and of the way in which the Methodist itinerancy forces its members into habits of inquiry and literary acquisition. The making of this

illustrious man was in the fellowship which he early enjoyed with Methodist circuit riders, and later in the place which he himself found in the itinerant pastorate, with its wide commissions, embracing every type of life and manners, and in the presidency of districts, one of them covering the entire Province of Maine and yet another embracing the oldest and proudest sections of the New England of the Pilgrims. These became to him a university from which he graduated into the largest activities and highest honors of his Church. Providence called him and fitted him to serve in the most important offices which have fallen to the leaders of the Methodism of the Western world.

This was the man who in his youth plowed the fallows in one of the most remote and isolated valleys of Maine. This narrow world of his youth was shut in on the westward by slaty hills, darkened by birch and pine wolds, from out whose fissures poured the foaming tarns and from whose shelving sides dropped the cataracts. The plow lad heard the voices of the pines and the birches mingling with the call of the cataract. He heard and would fain have answered, as his sires before had heard and answered the call of the sea. He plowed and yearned, and knew not whcrefore nor for what boon of good or action. Beyond the hills, westward and southward, lay the world—the young new republic, still rich in the possession of warrior heroes, diplomats, and the makers of her Constitution, and, most inspiring thought of all, counseled and ruled by "the father of his country." New England, Virginia, and the lands of the far and fragrant South—should he ever see them? Should he one day have part

and parcel with those who were even now making these lands great amongst the nations of the earth? The thought was one of enchantment, but he dared to think it. It was the daydream of a youth, and it soon faded into mist or was lost in the peaceful slumber that came after the day of toil. But the voice of one crying in the wilderness was ere long to be heard above the voices of birch wolds and cataracts, calling him to destiny larger and diviner than his boldest dreams had ever dared.

CHAPTER II.

"COME AND SEE."

As early as 1771 the Methodists in North America had cast wistful eyes toward New England, "the land of the Presbyterians," as it was later styled by Francis Asbury. But though the hope of conquest was always present, nothing definite looking toward that end was either undertaken or planned until a score of years later. To reach Canada the itinerants went around the estate of the Puritans, and to bring their forces into Nova Scotia they crossed it as aliens. Except in a few places along the southwestern border of Connecticut, no favorable opportunity to labor invited them until near the beginning of the last decade of the eighteenth century.

Perhaps those otherwise dauntless spirits were over-impressed with the reputation of the New England people for general culture and imperious religious prejudices. Charles Wesley had preached in Boston sixty years before, but as a priest of the Church of England and two years before the Aldersgate experience of his illustrious brother. George Whitefield had more than once made a triumphal tour of the land, and had left long, burning trails of revival fire behind him. He had been received as a prophet by Jonathan Edwards, the apostle of the indigenous faith, and had enjoyed besides the friendship and admiration of many civic leaders. Moreover, the soil had become sanctified in giving sepulture to his sleeping dust. And Whitefield was a

Methodist, but he believed and preached the Calvinism of Calvin himself. On the other hand, the Methodists who followed Strawbridge and Embury preached the gospel of Arminianism, the gospel of grace both free and abounding; and that was a gospel strange and unbelievable to New England ears and reasoning.

At the first informal Conference, held in 1773, after the arrival of Francis Asbury in America, that zealous disciple of Wesley made effective his demand for a more general circulation of the preachers; and Richard Boardman, the general assistant of Mr. Wesley, after throwing his lines well to the southward, reserved New England to himself as a field for evangelization. But Boardman was not the man for such an enterprise. It is pretty well established that he made a tour of inspection as far northward as Boston. Tradition also says that he preached there, but nothing permanent resulted from either the visit or the sermon. Freeborn Garretson is also believed to have preached once or twice in that metropolis during one of his journeys to or from his mission in Nova Scotia, as did also William Black the Wesleyan, while on his way to attend the American Conference. These were received by "the Presbyterians" as courtesy calls. It was a *carte de visite* evangelism which left no results. The nature of the theological defenses was such as called for a prolonged siege. The element of time was vital to the issue.

The man selected and reserved of providence for the work of planting Methodism in New England was Jesse Lee, a Virginian, and one of the greatest names in the early history of the American Church. While

traveling as the companion of Bishop Asbury, in 1784, he was treated by a merchant's clerk in Cheraw, South Carolina, to an account of the people of New England and of the religious conditions prevailing amongst them. From this account the zealous evangelist drew the conclusion that the people must be largely strangers to the vital truths of godliness. He therefore resolved that at the earliest opportunity he would become the bearer of a message to the land, and this purpose he cherished with unabated enthusiasm until an effectual door was opened.

On May 28, 1789, Bishop Asbury makes this entry in his Journal: "Our Conference began in New York. . . . New England stretcheth out the hand to our ministry, and I trust those lands will shortly feel the influence." At this Conference Jesse Lee was appointed to work in New England. In the entire territory there was not a Methodist chapel nor an appointed preaching place, nor had a single member ever been credited to Methodism within the entire border. It was one of the most unique mission fields that apostle ever entered.

On June 17, 1789, Jesse Lee preached at Norwalk what is said by some to have been the first Methodist sermon ever preached in Connecticut. No house could be secured for his use, so he published his message from the street corner. In this manner he pursued his journey, seeking places of vantage in a land settled and fortified in the doctrines of a fatalistic theology. By June 21 he had reached New Haven, and in September the first Methodist society ever formed in New England met at Stratford. Here also was built the first

Methodist house of worship in "the land of the Presbyterians." It afterwards became a famous and important center, and was long known as Lee's Chapel, so called in honor of its founder. In February of the next year three recruits were sent over the border to assist in the opening up of the work. At the Conference held in New York in October, 1790, Jesse Lee as presiding elder, John Bloodgood, John Lee, Nathaniel P. Mills, and Daniel Smith were appointed to the New England District. Four circuits were named: Fairfield, New Haven, Hartford, and Boston. It was a vast field, and held tremendous possibilities. The next year four hundred and eighty-one members, with six organized circuits, were reported; and the preaching corps was reënforced by the appointment of half a dozen extra itinerants. By 1792 a thousand members could be counted, and the work in Connecticut was detached from the New England District, which was now divided into four comprehensive circuits. By rapid movements the whole land was thus being marked off for future tilling.

As yet, however, the itinerants had not entered the Province of Maine; but they proposed to do so in earnest during the following year. Accordingly, at the Conference which met at Lynn in August, 1793, Asbury appointed the seasoned Jesse Lee to the "Province of Maine and Lynn." Without delay Lee threw his battle line far into the Maine wilds, so as to include in one vast circuit all the land west of the Kennebec River. This work, which was called the Readfield Circuit, was nearly two hundred miles east of the next nearest Methodist station in New England. Within its

wide area lay the fertile and isolated Sandy River Valley and the home of Joshua Soule, the one-time sea captain.

The community at Avon, with its well-tilled farms and well-bred people, could not escape the attention of so experienced an evangelist as Lee; so he lost no time in making his way into the valley. A preaching place was established at a house near the Soule home, and there young Joshua heard his first Methodist sermon at the lips of the Virginian. The miracle which was wrought upon Jesse Lee by the preaching of Robert Williams, the self-sent missionary to America, was destined to be wrought upon Joshua Soule by the preaching of Lee and his helpers. Robert Williams was the spiritual son of John Wesley, Lee was the son of Williams, and Soule the son of Lee. The last days of Bishop Soule are vividly alive in the memory of the writer of these pages. Joshua Soule, Jesse Lee, Robert Williams, John Wesley! Is it so, then, that but three steps measure back to the days and work of the great Wesley?

Could the spirit of prophecy have revealed to the Virginia itinerant, breaking paths through the unmarked Maine wilderness, that he was there, and not long after, to find the youth who, come to years, was to give to the laws and assemblies of Methodism the cast of enduring consistency and secure its doctrines and traditions against the sports of time and the hasty judgments of men; in a word, had it been shown him that he was there to discover and touch that spirit who, with Wesley and Asbury, was to complete the triumvirate of mastery in the first century of Metho-

dism, he had had a new incentive for his work. But this he could not know. The men of destiny are, like the gold nuggets and auriferous quartz, hid in out-of-the-way places. They are not many, and patience only can discover them. The message which Methodism sent to the Avon wilds was not only one which invited the farmer lad to test the promise, but it was also one of unconscious need against a fast-coming crisis. A man, large, masterful, supreme, was wanted. Whence he was to come, who could tell? But the morrow awaited his coming.

Dr. Nathan Bangs, an early historian of Methodism, himself a native of New England and a trophy of the evangelism of the itinerants, says that the first impression made by Lee and his associates on the New England folk was that they were men of broken-down means and circumstance in the South, who had chosen this method of repairing their fortunes. This was a compliment to their genteel manners and the business-like way in which they went about the discharge of their affairs. It was particularly noted that they were from the *South*. Even in that early day the compass spoke a significant language. It was the South that gave the gospel of Methodism to New England, and New England squared a large part of that obligation when she gave Joshua Soule to the South.

In 1795 Enoch Mudge, with Elias Hall as assistant, was appointed to the charge of Readfield Circuit. It is from Mudge that we have the first account of young Soule and of his affiliation with the Methodists. Mudge was himself a young man, and had been ordained a deacon only at the Conference which met in

July of that year. He was intelligent and fervid in manner and word, just the messenger to entice and capture a candid and reverent youth like Joshua Soule. It is certain that a warm and confidential friendship grew up between the young men even before Soule became a Methodist.

As already stated, a preaching place had been established at Avon by the itinerants. As this was only a few furlongs from the home of Captain Soule, his son Joshua was attracted to the place and became a constant attendant upon the services. He was at this time barely fifteen years of age. Mudge gives us this account of his youthful auditor: "He had a precocious mind, a strong memory, and a manly, dignified turn, although his appearance was exceedingly rustic." Thus, though the two were brought into close and intimate relations and the young rustic identified himself with the itinerant and his congregation, it appears that he did not during Mudge's pastorate make a profession of faith or join in society. Perhaps this hesitancy in taking a radical religious step was due to that constitutional deliberation which showed itself in every action of his life; perhaps also he was restrained by respect for the theological prejudices of his parents. But there was no return from the course upon which he had set his face. He found in the preaching of the Methodists a statement of the gospel to which his mind fully assented. He turned his back upon Calvinism forever; his heart had never been with it, and in the opposite view he found both mental satisfaction and the accordance of experience. He saw at once the agreement of Wesleyan theology with the Scriptures, and recognized

it as a thing he had met with in the higher thought of books. For the first time he heard a gospel in which fear gave place to love—in which, in fact, all fear was cast out by perfect love. It was easy to believe with such conditions established.

The time nor the place of his conversion is to be fixed so definitely as in the case of Wesley and Asbury. "Do you think you could come within three days of the exact time of your justification?" he was asked late in life. "No," was his reply. "Within a month?" "Yes; nearer than that." "Within a week?" "Yes; within that space of time I could fix the gracious change." The sense of change was definite.

But after conversion there came an experience, a revelation so marked and clear that, like the disciple invited to "come and see" where Messias dwelt, he remembered ever after the place and hour. On a certain morning before sunrise, as had become his established habit since meeting with the Methodists, he went out into the birch wood to pray. While engaged in this devotion he was blessed for the first time with the definite witness of the Spirit. Before this he had doubted; now he doubted no more. Heaven smiled within, as it smiled without. A new earth lay about him. The testimony to his adoption was complete. His earliest spiritual awakening — possibly his conversion — occurred under the preaching of Jesse Lee in 1793, when he was in his thirteenth year, while the experience above described is probably to be referred to the year 1795 or 1796; but it was not until 1797, and when he was fully sixteen years of age, that he assumed the vows of Church membership. This occurred under the

pastorate of Robert Yalalee, who was that year with Joshua Taylor (who was also presiding elder) in charge of the Readfield Circuit.

When after a long season of deliberation the convert decided to join the Church and chose the communion of the execrated Methodists, there was sorrow mingled with indignation in the home of the ex-sea captain. The father tried to dissuade his son from ever going again amongst the Methodists and sternly interdicted the step which he had proposed; while the mother, amid tears and remonstrations, plainly declared that she would regard him as disgraced and ruined if he joined himself to the hated sect. Such were the bitter prejudices in that region and at that time against "the people called Methodists."

A calm review of the matter in his own heart convinced the youth that he could pursue no other course than that upon which he had determined. He therefore had his father and his mother apart for a consideration together of his case. "With much respect and many tears," to continue the story in his own words, "I told them my convictions, and, besides, requested them to name a single instance in which I had ever disobeyed them. But now I felt it my solemn duty to unite with the Methodist Church, and to gain their consent and approval would afford me more happiness than anything else in the world." But the father would not abate his opposition, and "his mortification grew toward indignition" at the firm proposal; nor had his mother's opposition and displeasure decreased. With renewed entreaties and tears she besought him to turn aside from his purpose.

"It cost me something to be a Methodist," he said in after years. "I became one fully expecting to be an exile from my father's house." But parental love proved stronger than credal prejudice. The son followed the drawings of the Spirit and continued in dutiful service at home. The hot anger and persecutions for which he looked were never visited upon him. Scant reference was made in the home to the matter thereafter, but the son attended his meetings alone. However, the power of Calvinism was broken in that household, and the end was not distant.

It seems certainly established that young Soule took the vows under Robert Yalalee in 1797, as I have recorded above, but Bishop McTyeire says that "he joined the Church under Thomas Cope at one of the week-day meetings." This may be easily explained. The General Minutes show that Cope was in the New England District during both the years 1795 and 1796. He likely exchanged in the winter of 1795-96, on the three-months plan, with Enoch Mudge, and so received the future bishop into society on probation soon after the interview with his parents described above. His probation expiring under the pastorate of Yalalee, he was admitted to vows in the regular order. This understanding accords with the most interesting account which Bishop McTyeire and others have given of the conversion, soon after, of Captain Soule, his wife, two elder sons, and two daughters. In 1796, during the probationary period of Joshua's membership, Cyrus Stebbins was appointed to the care of the Readfield Circuit. This Stebbins appears to have been a man of extraordinary powers of oratory and of more

than ordinary education. He had been but a year or two in the traveling connection, but was experienced in public speech, and had read the controversial books of the day, especially those against Deism on the one hand and against Calvinism on the other—the two extremes which the early Methodist preachers had to meet and refute. The coming of this Boanerges and master of polemics into the Sandy River country provoked from the first a deep interest amongst all classes of religious people. Young Soule, who was particularly impressed by the power and personality of the preacher, was led to wish that his father might hear him. There, however, seemed little hope that he could be induced to give the champion an audience. But as one of Stebbins's week-day appointments was at hand, the son resolved to hazard an invitation to his father to attend. The two were plowing together in the field, and at the turn of a furrow the son said: "Father, a distinguished man is to preach for us this afternoon. Will you go to hear him?" "No," returned the ex-sea captain with viking firmness; "I have heard one or two of these Methodists. They are all alike: enthusiasts, and do not know how to preach." The incident seemed to be closed, but the son ventured a respectful remonstrance. "Does your law judge a man before he is heard?" was a question whose form and spirit were equally surprising to the father. He found no words with which to answer, but became seriously thoughtful. Although still deeply displeased with his son's religious affiliations, he was made to respect his decision and frankness.

The noon hour came, and the horses were unhitched,

stabled, and fed. After this came the midday meal, which was eaten with silence between father and son, or at least without a syllable of reference to the conversation of the morning. The time having arrived when the old seaman should have returned to his plowing, the son was surprised to hear him order that the two horses be groomed and saddled. Within an hour father and son were riding side by side toward the Methodist preaching place, a mile and a half distant. To young Joshua the hour was crucial, the occasion heavy with issue. His solicitude was great, but the preacher justified the boast which he had made to his father in the forenoon. The theme was Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones that lived. It was a favorite subject with the early itinerants, and suited well the fervid and picturesque style of Stebbins. The message had power for all who heard. The old sea captain listened, surprised, interested, and disturbed, if not convinced. Great was young Soule's delight when his father consented to be presented to the preacher, but what was his joy to hear him invite the preacher to accept for the night the hospitality of his home! The invitation was accepted with a hearty promptness. The tops of the mulberry trees were moving prophetically.

"Knowing my father's prejudices," said the Bishop, "I had my fears. He was a thoughtful man, and had read much in theology; and he considered the arguments for Calvinism unanswerable. Already I saw a controversy in store; so I made it convenient to drop behind as the company rode along and have a word with the preacher, putting him on his guard, and let him know what was required and expected of him."

Next to the outright preaching of the gospel, the early Methodist preachers enjoyed meeting a theological antagonist spoiling for a controversy. Stebbins furbished his armor and loosened his blade. Supper over, the sea captain threw down the gage in a general challenge of the doctrines antithetical to Calvinism. The field thus laid off was a wide one, but Stebbins soon drove his host to short strokes on the chief of the "five points." The contest was maintained until one o'clock the next morning. "With pleasure I saw my father hemmed in," declared the Bishop in after years. "He could go no farther. He was a candid man, and confessed himself foiled." Without the anger and resentment that usually attend the defeat of prejudice and bigotry, the old captain saluted the victor and drew off.

Prayer had been offered in the house night and morning during the preacher's visit; and the next day, as his guest prepared to depart, the younger Soule was astonished to hear his father invite him not only to make his home a regular stopping place, but also to hold his monthly circuit preaching services under his roof. This invitation was as promptly accepted as the first, and the next appointment was published for the house of the sea captain. The congregation which crowded the chambers of the Avon farmhouse was a notable one for the time and the region. Two or three Baptist preachers from different parts of the valley were present. The neighbors from far and near, enticed by the juncture of opposites, came to hear the champion of Arminianism prophesy in the house of the champion of Calvinism. As before, Stebbins rose to the demands of the occasion. It was a day remem-

bered to the glory of the Son of Man. For a month the old seaman had contemplated the wreck of his former theological notions; to-day the tides swept him into a new confidence. Within six months of the time that Joshua had joined in society on probation his father and nearly all the remaining members of the family followed his example. "So early did he begin to show those qualities that made him a leader among men, a captain of the Lord's host."

Captain Soule lived many years after his union with the Methodists and became an official member and a local leader of the Church to which his youngest son was destined to give so long and so illustrious a service.

CHAPTER III.

Among the Prophets.

It must be foreseen that a life so evidently sought of Providence as was that of the youth Joshua Soule could be called to no ordinary destiny. Only the expected, therefore, is found to have happened when, at the age of seventeen, he confessed that he had received a divine commission to preach and asked the Church for a license. The early Methodists placed great emphasis upon the doctrine of a distinct call of the evangelist to his office. This call was looked to as the pledge of a distinct experience of grace to be found in the hearts of his converts. The points involve what may be called the peculiar doctrines of Methodism and describe its centripetal and centrifugal forces. The messenger is divinely prepared and sent; the convert is divinely sealed. The outcome of Methodism is referrable to these related tenets. Naked-handed grace and providential calls have shown a manifest in strange contrast with the ministry of "the younger son" incumbents of farmed-out livings. How different the "brown-bread" preachers of Wesley and the rustic American itinerants of Asbury from the polished but powerless curates of eighteenth century Anglicanism! The finish of the schools, the letter of privileges, and the traditions of rank separated them. Before the problem of the world's needs the priests of softness were helpless, while the men called to the evangel of hardness and plainness took the task of the age's re-

demption as they took their native airs. They changed the social and religious destinies of England and gave to virgin America its enduring evangelical spirit. Although the early Methodist preachers, both in England and the New World, were drawn from many different walks of life, they exhibited a class or order-likeness which indicated that the entire fraternity had been drafted under a common call. Joshua Soule, though he early became "the most dominating personality in American Methodism," was strongly marked with the homologies of his order. Indeed, from the beginning to the end of his career he passed sympathetically through every rank and stage of experience known to the early itinerancy. His preparation came in service; his triumph fell to him not in one supreme recognition, but in multiplied installments apportioned to the changes of a long life. His own laconic record of his career is: "The Lord called me to preach, and I went."

In the year 1797-98 the Province of Maine was separated from the remainder of New England and erected into a district, with Joshua Taylor as presiding elder. There were but six circuits in this district; and of the chief, Readfield, Taylor was made senior pastor in addition to his duties as "president elder," with Robert Yalalee assistant or junior pastor. It was during this year that Joshua Soule completed his probation and became a member in full standing of the Avon congregation. In August, 1798, was held in the Readfield church the first Methodist Conference ever convened in the territory now embraced within the State of Maine. The Readfield church also enjoyed the distinction of

being the first house of worship built by the Methodists in the province. It was a pretentious structure for the times and locality, and particularly so, considered as the property of the pikestaff followers of Asbury.

A Methodist Conference being a doubly novel occasion in the province, it was expected that the attendance upon it would be great. Five days previous to the sitting Bishop Asbury, traveling thither in company with Jesse Lee, prophesied that it would "probably draw the people from far and near." The expectation was not to be disappointed. "From one thousand to eighteen hundred souls," writes Asbury in his Journal, "attended public preaching and ordination." A new or temporary gallery had been constructed in the church. This was so crowded with eager listeners that the timbers began to creak and threatened a collapse. An incipient panic was started, but was checked without serious consequences. Nine preachers sat with Asbury in this Conference. Jesse Lee was also present, but only as Bishop Asbury's traveling companion. Enoch Mudge, Timothy Merritt, and Joshua Taylor were the leaders of the rank. The district had, however, but recently lost by transfer Nicholas Snethen, long prominent as one of Asbury's associates and later still more prominent as one of the founders of the Methodist Protestant Church. The pastors reported a total of nearly one thousand members gathered in the Province, and this in the short space of five years, from a sparse and widely scattered population, in the face of all but insuperable difficulties and opposition. The O'Kelly defection in Virginia and the Hammitt controversy in South Carolina had cost the connection

a large total of members, but the marked success of the preachers in New England had helped to supply the loss. The whole of New England could now show a total of nearly five thousand members. It was not without reason that the soul of the heroic Lee rejoiced at what it was permitted him to see at the Readfield Conference.

It is impossible to say positively that the Soules attended the Conference meeting at Readfield. Most probably the son did. His plans for entering himself into the ministry were by this time so definite that he would certainly wish to attend. The distance was not great, and the season of the year was that in which he would have the necessary leisure. The fact that almost immediately after this Conference he asked for license and began to travel as a "helper" is our best reason for thinking that he had heard Asbury's stirring Conference sermon on "This Ministry" and had witnessed the impressive ceremonies of ordination.

Joshua Taylor was returned to the presiding eldership of the Maine District, and was also again designated as senior pastor of the Readfield Circuit, with Jesse Stoneman as junior. Some time in the autumn following Joshua Soule was licensed by the Readfield Quarterly Conference to preach, and at the same time and by the same body was recommended to the Annual Conference for admission into the traveling connection. Thus, without having been either an exhorter or a local preacher, he stepped at a single stride into the pastoral rank. The Annual Conference was to meet the following June in New York City, so the presiding elder appointed him to be his traveling compan-

ion around the district. Upon this service he entered on January 5, 1799, his eighteenth birthday being still seven months away. Taylor himself was but twenty-four years of age, but had already had fully seven years of seasoning work as an itinerant. He was a mighty man of God, not learned, not gifted as men are wont to measure gifts; but his labors were honored of Heaven through a ministry of seventy years. He lived to see the rustic lad whom he had inducted into the ministry rise to the highest places of distinction and power in the Church, and also to witness his intrepidity in the times when the world divided at his feet. In long journeys from Portland to the most distant Methodist stations on the British border and back again, in labors abundant and exhortations multiplied, the young presiding elder and his young companion finished the Conference year. The mettle of the rustic prophet, but recently plucked from the haymow and the husk heaps of the barn, began to be seen. The rule was for him to exhort after Taylor's sermon. His youth and constrained manner at once secured for him the generous sympathy of the people. But his unusual endowments were also quickly detected, and it was not long until the congregations began to regard the exhortations after the elder's sermon as "the last for which the first was made."

There was no Conference held in New England for the year 1799, the appointments for the Eastern States being made at the Conference held in New York City, beginning June 19. In the previous year only seven sittings had been appointed for the entire connection, and for this year the number had been reduced to six.

There were two reasons for this. It had been felt by the preachers, and the feeling had been plainly expressed, that an unnecessary number of Conference meetings were being appointed. There being no Conference boundary lines then as now, the proximity of some of these meetings to one another resulted in much confusion. Besides this, Bishop Asbury was now alone in the superintendency, and his strength was at the lowest ebb. On May 26, less than a month before the opening of the Conference in New York, he wrote: "I have had great dejection of mind and awful calculations of what may be and what may never be. I have now groaned along three hundred miles from Baltimore." Again, on June 2, he wrote: "Dr. Anderson, Drs. Ridgely and Neadham considered my case; they advised a total suspension of preaching, fearing a consumption or a dropsy in the breast." But the way in which he "suspended" was to hold the Conference in Philadelphia four days thereafter and then push on to New York to preach and do double work in that sitting. Marvelous man!

I have searched in vain for some evidence that Joshua Soule attended the Conference which received him on trial. It is possible that of the ten preachers in the Maine District only Joshua Taylor, the presiding elder, and Timothy Merritt took the long journey to New York. It was not unusual for the presiding elder only to report in person where the work of an isolated field was to be considered at a distant sitting. It was a still more common procedure for the presiding elder to represent applicants for admission on trial; so that if Soule was really absent from the Conference in New

York when his case was acted upon, he was in the succession of many precedents. Bishop Andrew, his colleague and close associate of after years, was not present at the Conference session in South Carolina which indorsed his application and gave him a place amongst the itinerants. The examinations of those days did not lay so much stress on literary preparation as on the tongue of good report under which the candidate's character and his zeal in evangelism came, and the presiding elder was his sponsor.

The Portland Circuit was this year the head station of the Maine District, as it had been in the previous year. To it Joshua Soule, the acolyte, was assigned as junior preacher, with Timothy Merritt as preacher in charge. This wilderness curacy was something unusual in extent, being five hundred miles in circumference and containing twenty-seven monthly appointments. Sometimes the two itinerants traveled together; but generally they moved in opposite directions, or else with a fortnight and a long reach of roadway between them. A few merchants and land owners, lumbermen, shipbuilders, fishermen, crofters, and laborers made up the people whom they found in their wide field. The old-new town of Portland, containing then not above two thousand people, and many villages gave a leaven of politeness and provincial culture to the whole. It was, socially speaking, the most important pastorate in the entire district, and, next to the Readfield Circuit, contained the largest Methodist population. It became to the rustic young evangelist from Sandy Valley at once a charge to be instructed in spiritual things and a schoolmaster to be used in passing

himself through the rudiments of self-development and training.

It was at Portland—probably during the previous year—that young Soule got his first remembered sight of the sea. He was born at the very verge of the ocean, but it was only with baby eyes that he there saw the far-receding fields of blue on which so many generations of his kin had worked out their fortunes and destinies. Upon the untraveled landsman the first vision of the sea has a distinctly widening impression. It is the monitor without lips or hands. In it the Deity is mirrored, and upon its bosom is broadly borne the dread symbol of eternity. The emotions rise instantly and tumultuously to answer its fascinating mysteries; the soul hails it as the echo of itself, and the intellectual powers strain to conform themselves to its illimitable withdrawings. The tides did not discover a poet or a sea dreamer in the young Maine circuit rider, but they did awaken a sea-king mastery amongst his sober and prodigiously expanding thoughts. From that moment he began a conquest of books and gave himself to a study of those world-moving concerns that engage men at their best. Thus it was that he undertook while yet a youth to gather to himself those resources of knowledge and power that quickly made him "the dominating personality" of his Church. The towering head, surmounted by a shock of hair that shook like Lebanon, which was so marked a feature of his physical *ensemble* in age, was equally a distinguishing member in his youth. His cisternlike cranial cavities were crammed with healthy gray fiber, fed from the shorts of Sandy River cereals, thrilled with the

ozone of the birch hills, vital with the telepathic fellowship of all the living great, and, above all, aglow with a most genuine religious zeal and faith.

No detailed record of this or other of Joshua Soule's years in Maine has been preserved. Unlike McKendree and Asbury, he kept no journal, nor did he leave other available documents. Bishop McTyeire, who twenty-five or more years ago set about to write the memoirs of his great colleague, abandoned the work because of the paucity of material at hand. But a new time has come, opening up to the biographer of the father of the Methodist Constitution not only new sources of information concerning the earlier years of his subject, but also aiding to new interpretations of his services rendered in the crucial and historic years of the Church's life. The story of these earlier years as I am putting it together from point to point has been winnowed from the pages of many authors or else made to appear through a study of the experiences and situations of several of the Bishop's contemporaries. However, but for the crown of distinguished service pressed upon his brow in later years, the story of his earlier sacrifices might have been as hopelessly lost as were those of others who labored in the same field. Dr. Stevens in his history expresses regret "that from the deficiency of the contemporary records of the Church names which should be precious in its memory must remain in its annals like those fixed stars of our firmament the remoteness of which occasions alike our ignorance of their conditions and their steadfastness of position and brilliance."

Like Taylor, Merritt was a young man, and had been

but recently ordained a deacon. Thus it had been Soule's fortune to be in the close fellowship of only young men—Mudge, Stebbins, Taylor, and Merritt. As to that, however, it could hardly have been otherwise. Nine out of every ten of the preachers of this period were men under forty. Dr. Coke had remarked upon this at the Christmas Conference, but he added to his observation that hardships and abundant labors had left upon their faces a token of maturity and self-mastery beyond their years. As it had been with Soule the year before while traveling with Taylor, so it was in his work with Merritt: the interest of their parishioners largely centered around the younger man. This was not because they counted him as already having attained, but because of his even then "giving promise of a future of great usefulness and commanding influence." Unlike Asbury and McKendree, the third great American bishop—in some respects greater than either of the others—manifested destiny from the moment of his entrance into the ministry.

The congeniality of Merritt and Soule was great. They mutually thirsted for holiness and knowledge. As described by one who knew him through many years, Merritt was possessed of a rare intellectual vigor. "His judgment was remarkably clear and discriminating, grasping the subjects of its investigation in all their compass and penetrating to their depths." He lacked fancy and imagination, and in this was not an uncongenial fellow-thinker with his junior, who was from the beginning most severely practical and logical. No man of his day had more prominence and influence in New England Methodism than Merritt. At a later

period of his life he became one of the editors of *Zion's Herald* (Boston), and at a still later date was assistant editor of the *New York Advocate and Journal.* He, too, lived to see his youthful associate attain enduring distinction as a leader and lawgiver in Methodism. It is thus from the recorded memories of the few of Bishop Soule's early comrades who lived to see his greatness that we are enabled to retrieve enough material to reconstruct even the outlines of the story of his beginning.

The result of the joint labors of Merritt and Soule on the Portland Circuit for the year 1799 was a fair increase in the membership. There had also been some growth in the eastern circuits, and a new work had been formed in the district. It is not now possible to tell how much the real increase in the Portland Circuit had been cut down by emigration eastward and the detachments made to form this new circuit. The successes of those years is not to be gauged by the figures found in statistical tables. The seeds of future harvests were sowed by men who must needs leave to far-off successors the full reaping. The reaping came in a time ordained of God; the manner of sowing was not less of his ordering. There were at the beginning many to hinder. These hindrances usually took a controversial turn of more or less bitterness. Sometimes they were trivial of nature. But whether one or the other, the polemics always found "the itinerating peddlers" equal to the issue.

Many were the consequential discourses, pamphlets, and books launched against Methodism and its pioneer representatives in New England. I have just laid down

an old volume of this class written in rather fiery style —an echo of the attrition of Wesleyan theology against the fixed body of New England Puritanism. The author deals quite severely with Asbury's preachers. "Wolves in sheep's clothing," "the false prophets that should come in the latter days," "the itinerating peddlers of a false doctrine" are some of the arguments offered in rebuttal against the evangel of free grace and conscious salvation from sin. A spirited contrast is also drawn between the "republican Puritans" and "the monarchy-loving John Wesley," the head of this adventurous sect of new Episcopalians. Some threatening prophecies are also uttered. The miracle of Methodism's New England success is all the greater in view of these things. But a time was at hand when New England Methodism was producing and exhibiting an indigenous ministry. Joshua Soule was the effectual answer to a hundred Puritan anti-Methodist prophecies. A handful of corn from the top of the mountain now seeded the furrows of the most distant valleys and hillsides.

A high authority in New England Methodist history describes a typical revival season in Maine in which Merritt was the chief human instrumentality. Its signs were those which marked the Jarratt and Shadford meetings in Virginia about the beginning of the Revolutionary War. The fire burned from house to house and from community to community. The hymns sung through the wildwoods of Maine were not different in word or spirit from those sung in the assemblies of Virginia. The miracle of the Methodism of the eighteenth century was its victories in New En-

gland. With New England, Methodism received Joshua Soule.

Lynn, in the eastern part of Massachusetts, had been the headquarters of Jesse Lee in 1793, when he planned the successful invasion of the Province of Maine. The Conference had also met there in that year, as it had in the year 1792. It was a post of importance to the Methodists, and, being midway between Maine and the southern stations, was selected for the session of the Conference of 1800. It was Soule's first Conference as an itinerant, and it introduced him to a wider fellowship of his brethren than he had yet enjoyed. Amongst the important men of his day whom he at this time added to his acquaintance were Daniel Ostrander, George Pickering, Thomas F. Sargent, Joshua Wells, Elijah R. Sabin, and Epaphras Kibbey, the last named being that year appointed to Readfield Circuit.

Soule had now had well-nigh two years of experience as an itinerant, and his brethren judged it safe to intrust to him the undivided responsibility of a pastoral charge. He was accordingly assigned to the Union River Circuit, the southernmost work in Maine, and extending from the Penobscot to the British line. It was a new work resulting from a rearrangement of the circuit lines of the previous year. From the statistics —the only clew left us—nothing definite can be learned concerning the work or the progress of the charge during the year. It was an immemorial year. Lost was the young itinerant in the wilds of a primitive land in which he traveled lonely and interminable paths which he himself often blazed or broke through the unmarked forests; but that he went on as before, "thirsting for

knowledge and holiness," there can be no manner of doubt, for he reappears at the end of the long and recordless year, his heart aglow with zeal and his face shining as from a vision of divine glory vouchsafed in a place apart. Silent as was that year, it is certain that it was during its months that it was discovered to his superiors that in him a man of extraordinary powers and capabilities was beginning to develop.

Early in July, 1801, the pastor of the Union River Circuit repaired to the ship port at the mouth of the Penobscot, and there took passage for Boston, meaning to go from there to Lynn, where, as in the previous year, the Conference was to meet. The not unusual experience of a sailor befell on the voyage. Contrary winds and calms played havoc with the ship's schedule, so that before Soule could reach Lynn the Conference had finished its work and adjourned. He had, however, been approvingly reported of by his elder, admitted by vote into full connection, and elected to deacon's orders. His assignment for the year, he discovered, was to the Sandwich Circuit, in that region of Massachusetts contiguous to Cape Cod. The Methodists were not numerous in that quarter; and as it was at the very center of New England Puritanism, great things, in the sense in which other regions had received the Wesleyans, were not to be expected. The year's service, however, introduced the Maine rustic into new conditions and such as were calculated to quicken his intellectual motions as well as try the manner of his faith and convictions. That he experienced a test of his spiritual substance, there can be little doubt; but the men of that time came from the fire like gold when it

is tried. During this year he laid hold upon a larger acquaintance in the older section of New England and attracted the attention of the older and stronger men of the connection. He had for presiding elder this year, as during all his previous itinerant experience, his warm-hearted and faithful friend, Joshua Taylor. For near neighbors in the work he had Joshua Wells, on the Nantucket charge, and George Pickering and Thomas F. Sargent on the Boston, Lynn, and Marblehead Circuit. That was a fitting fellowship for one who in youth bore the manifest signs of future intellectual and spiritual greatness. Southward in the third New England district were also such men as Peter Vannest, Phinehas Peck, and Elijah R. Sabin, with whom he must have had early and comforting intercourse. The whole itinerant body in New England in those years was knit into compactness of purpose through the dominance of a spirit of unworldliness and brotherly affection. The pressure of opposition from without enhanced the centripetality of their love. In that unity and testimony they were irresistible.

The New England Conference meeting for 1802 was appointed to be held at Monmouth, Province of Maine, July 1; but on the way thither Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat held at Cranston, Rhode Island, on June 20, a preliminary meeting or conference for the benefit of the preachers in the two southern districts. At this meeting Joshua Soule was ordained a deacon, he having failed, as it will be remembered, to reach the Conference of the previous year. Bishop Asbury was in an exceptionally feeble frame, and the offices were taken by Bishop Whatcoat. Bishop Asbury's Journal speaks

of but one ordination at this meeting. The candidate was Joshua Soule. After the ordination came the sacrament; and after that the bishops in turn preached a full-timed discourse, and then the memorable session adjourned. It is certain that Soule did not go on to Monmouth to attend the regularly appointed session, and that he, with the other preachers of the southern stations, received their appointments at this time. Bishop Asbury says that at the Maine sitting there were present "fifteen members and nine probationers." The appointments for the Maine District for this year show eighteen names. Only six attendants, therefore, from the Massachusetts stations would have been necessary to complete the number. The Boston District alone shows sixteen names. Bishop Asbury also names the deacons who were examined and ordained, and the name of Joshua Soule is wanting.

Like the Conference held at Readfield in 1798, this Conference at Monmouth was one long remembered. From two to three thousand people attended. Five sermons were preached, and Bishop Asbury closes his Journal note on the occasion with the hope "that many went away profited." In the list of appointments there completed and read out Joshua Soule was assigned to the Needham Circuit, whose nearest preaching places were within a few hours' ride of Boston. For junior associate he had that year Dan Perry, admitted most likely at the Cranston meeting, when Soule was ordained to the diaconate. Perry appears to have been a man of moderate talents. He, however, rendered acceptable service and advanced to the order of elder, but located permanently in 1809.

As with Soule's two previous years, the year on the Needham Circuit has no detailed memorial in any extant record. There remain but the bare figures of the statistical tables, and these show a slight decrease in membership for the year; but the testimony of being a strict disciplinarian, borne to him on all sides, may explain this. He preached and demanded, as did Asbury, the observance of "the Methodist rule." It will be remembered that while young Asbury was advocating and making possible the mighty scheme of the American itinerancy, the society in New York dwindled in membership under his rigid disciplinary rule. Soule was in this succession; and yet he was known to be, both as a pastor and bishop, most careful not to apply any rule of discipline until the last means of correction had been exhausted. In later life he declared that he had "scarcely ever found a case in which persevering efforts failed to restore the wanderer." Perhaps in his first experiences he was himself wanting in perseverance in this office.

The Conference appointed for New England in 1803 met in Boston the second Thursday in June, being the eighth day. Both Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat were present, and both were feeble. Bishop Asbury's Journal says: "We ordained Joshua Soule and Nathan Emory elders, and Edward Whittle deacon." It is definitely known that Soule was ordained by Bishop Whatcoat to the eldership, as he had been by him ordained the previous year to the diaconate.

It may be remarked upon in passing that at this time Bishop Asbury recorded in his Journal his conviction that the great needs of Boston were "good reli-

gion and good water." He would not mention names, but he "could tell of a congregation in Boston that sold their pastor to another congregation for $1,000, and then hired the money out at the unlawful interest of twenty or thirty per cent." "How would it tell to the South," he asks, "that priests were amongst the notions of Yankee traffic?" It cannot be doubted that Asbury was very much of a Southerner in his day, as Soule soon afterwards became. The Boston District for 1803 contained thirteen appointments, served by seventeen itinerants. The fourth appointment in the list read: "Nantucket, Joshua Soule."

Nantucket Island, off the mainland of Massachusetts, with its neighboring islets, has constituted the county of Nantucket since the organization of the colony into a commonwealth. In colonial times, as now, it had a thrifty population engaged almost wholly in whaling and cod-fishery. It was such a community as invited and attracted the early Methodists. In 1799 the island was named as one of the Massachusetts stations, and Joseph Snelling was placed in charge. By 1803 nearly a hundred members had been gathered into society. Perhaps on no part of the soil of New England did the Methodists meet so little opposition as amongst the crofters and hardy fishermen of Nantucket Island. It can be imagined how cordially they would welcome as their pastor the son of a once famous seaman, whose name and ship may no doubt have been remembered by not a few of the older skippers. It is equally probable that the itinerant found there some of his own kith and kin, the near-by coast being the boyhood home of his father.

The Rev. Enoch Mudge, who, it will be remembered, was one of Soule's early religious advisers, reported in a correspondence had with Dr. Abel Stevens that while on the New London Circuit in 1794 he had received into society on probation Sarah Allen, an orphan, then in her twelfth year. She was at the time receiving her education, though I can get no clew as to whether this was at New London or Providence, which latter place was her home. This Christian maiden, of whose youth so tender and beautiful a memory is preserved, and of whose devoted years of womanhood and age so many testimonials abide, was destined to be the wife of Joshua Soule. On the 18th day of September, 1803, being then in her twentieth year, she gave her hand in marriage to her itinerant lover and went with him to spend the remainder of the year on his circuit in the Atlantic Island. The unbroken felicity of their married life was to continue for more than four and fifty years.

CHAPTER IV.

The Methodist Proconsul.

The presiding eldership in early Methodism was the right arm of its power. It made the episcopacy effective—the episcopacy as expressed in the authority, personality, and policy of Francis Asbury. But for the "captains of tens" even the apostolic purpose of the captain of the general itinerant host had become increasingly ineffective, and the host itself had marched and countermarched in the ways of a growing confusion. Jesse Lee, presiding elder, very largely expounds the history of the first stages of Methodist propagation in New England, while the triumphs of the early itinerants in the West are closely related to the leadership of William McKendree, their local overseer.

Asbury had remarkable insight into character, but this skill in character-reading became effective through his use of the presiding eldership. When he sought an official representative, he almost invariably put his hand on the right man. The men who constituted the presiding eldership in his day had been made to his purpose, as Arthur made his knights. They had become bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, thinking his thoughts and animated by his spirit. They reproduced his leadership in a hundred provincial fields; they divined his policies afar off, and made them effective in his absence.

As the connection grew in membership and extent

of territory, the office of the presiding eldership grew in importance and effectiveness. The incumbent became an ecclesiastical proconsul, his authority extending over the face of whole provinces and, in some cases, including the territory of several incipient States. The talent and courage of the initiative were expected of him. He obeyed orders, but his orders prescribed a wide latitude. He broadly interpreted the statutes of his fraternity and brought things to pass. He magnified his office and made it forever honorable. But his personality was the main asset of his administration. Where that failed, the office failed. Nor has time changed the working of the law. The episcopacy itself comes under the rule: its responsibilities become opportunity to the man providentially called. It is a great office when great talents and a great soul are united to administer it. Methodism is a personal force throughout.

Joshua Soule, the man of what marked personality has already been shown, the destined expounder of the design and uses of the presiding eldership, was called to administer that office when but twenty-three years of age. His appointment expressed both the personal and the official choice of Bishop Asbury. The New England Conference for the year 1804 met at Buxton, Province of Maine. Asbury's Journal contains no entry concerning the Conference session, but notes many incidents of the going and returning journeys. The particular minute in the proceedings of the Conference which concerns our narrative is this: "District of Maine, Joshua Soule, presiding elder." The extent of the commission was apostolic.

The peculiar phraseology of the minute was justified. The presiding elder's district to which Soule was appointed embraced the entire Province, or political district, of Maine. It was one thousand two hundred miles around this mighty realm. It contained twelve circuits and a single station. From the marshes and downs of the near sea level the paths which the itinerant rode climbed the shingly declivities and the inland mountains, compassed innumerable lakes, crossed wide streams and dashing torrents, and penetrated with tortuous windings darkling forests in many of which the sound of the woodman's ax had never been heard. He sought the remotest settlements, made regular junctions with the courses of the circuit riders, and "shared fully the sufferings of the early itinerancy." He braved the storms of winter, lodged in the cabins of squatters, or slept as often in the frost, with only the snow-laden branches of the birch for a roof. And for what earthly reward? His compensation amounted to scarcely more than enough to meet his expenses. But the divine Spirit who "selected and anointed him in youth for his signal achievements in the Church" gave him courage and also provided the needful bread. The young wife was either at the paternal home in Sandy River Valley, where the chivalric zeal and energy of the first Methodist preachers he knew had fired his heart with a desire for heavenly adventure, or else was with friends in Portland, where his first pastoral labors had been given. During two years' service on this district all the days he was permitted to spend in the company of that young wife did not amount to three weeks. But "she had his

spirit" and encouraged him to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*

It was during this presiding eldership that his powers as a preacher ripened into fullness and effectiveness. Nature made his body, his featural aspects, and his voice into an instrument of mastery. His presence was commanding, and before his mouth was even opened his hearers confessed his authority. Grace and patient effort had added the substance, the passion, and the letter of the message. Three things make a great preacher—namely, a passionate belief in the truth of his message, a knowledge of its contents to the saturation of his mind and heart, and the intellectual and

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*While presiding at a Western Conference, after he had been more than twenty years a bishop, he indulged in the following eloquently expressed sentiments stirred by a review of the labors and providences of his years: "I have occupied the humblest cabin, scarcely supplied with the necessaries of life. I have slept on the earth with a bearskin for my couch and the heavens for my protection. I have bedded on snow from three to four feet deep with the heavens spread over me, and from such scenes of deprivation and exposure I have entered the stately mansion house with every comfort earth can afford. And what was the great difference to me? What matters it to a man who has covenated with God and the whole Church to devote himself wholly to the work of saving souls, whether he occupies a wigwam or a palace, so that he may fulfill his sacred vows and accomplish the glorious work of the ministry? To such a man all outward things should be equal. His bliss depends on no such accidents. Man's soul is an empire in itself, and should scorn to repose on such trifles. I declare to you, brethren, I care not whether I fall at home in the bosom of my family or far away among strangers, so that I may fall at my post."

physical aptitudes for its pronouncement. These all met in Joshua Soule. The foundations of his experience were deeply laid in faith and love. He was profoundly spiritual, and the witness within had been confirmed through tests that left his confidence steadfast. He had the Pauline passion for evangelization. He was but little in debt to the schoolmaster; but he had found a private key to the "king's treasures" of knowledge, and had appropriated a great wealth of practical and classical information which he used with facility both in conversation and public discourse. The high tides of his perorations flowed easily into the grandeur of those great epics and prose masterpieces from which he was accustomed to quote. Here it was that deep answered to deep.

It is to be remembered that these words are written concerning a man who had not yet fully rounded out his twenty-fourth year. When all the circumstances are considered, it is doubtful if the history of the pulpit furnishes a parallel of this development of power and mastery in expression in one so youthful.

The camp meeting and the other evangelistic adaptations so effectively used by the Methodists in the earlier years of the nineteenth century were coming into vogue in New England, and particularly in the Province of Maine. These furnished great assemblies upon whom the preaching of the youthful presiding elder produced impressions the most tremendous not only as to the convincing and convicting logic of its gospel, but also as to its mastery of form. Of his sermons at this time Dr. Stevens, the Church historian, says: "They were reported to have been distinguished by that breadth

of view and majesty of style which in later years, notwithstanding some abatement through the variety of his responsibilities, have continued to mark with greatness his pulpit efforts. His word was oftentimes in irresistible power, bearing down upon the large assemblies which collected to hear him like the storm on the bending forest." A period selected from the peroration of a sermon delivered some years later may be taken as typical of that "breadth of view and majesty of style" which characterized his camp-meeting and other discourses delivered while a presiding elder in Maine: "Man is subject to bondage through fear; conscious of his accountability, his sinfulness, and guilt; and knowing that it is appointed to him once to die, and after death to appear in judgment, he trembles at the thought of his approaching dissolution, and fears to appear in the presence of his Judge. Reason affords him but a feeble support in the hour of his alarm and trial. Her lights are but dim in the dark valley through which he has to pass, and she casts but a glimmering ray on the scenes of eternity which lie before him. What shall dispel his doubts, remove his fears, support his trembling spirit, and illuminate his path? What shall fortify him against the terrors of these tremendous events? The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which life and immortality are brought to light; the gospel of the grace of God, the fountain of pardon and purification in the grand atonement, the foundation of a steadfast and lively hope in its exceeding great and precious promises."

Add to a concourse of periods like this a sonorous voice, a commanding figure, a masterful personality,

and an exalted and tested purpose, and you discover the hiding of the power that bore down the multitudes as the storms bear down the trees of the forest.

The Minutes for 1804 show five districts in the New England Conference. Besides that of Soule, the names of the presiding elders of three of these districts are still gratefully cherished in the hearts of New England Methodists and also of Methodists at large. These names are John Brodhead, Daniel Ostrander, and George Pickering. The statistics for the year showed nearly nine thousand members, of whom two thousand four hundred were in the District of Maine. This showed a net increase of two hundred for the year in the district. The New England membership was already half that of the Baltimore Conference, and the two thousand four hundred in full connection in Maine probably represented an entire tenth of the population of the Province. Such was the advance which Methodism, led by an indigenous presiding eldership, was making in the newest "land of the Presbyterians."

Soule's second year as the Methodist proconsul of the Province of Maine was in all likelihood much the same as the first; but as with the first, there abides so scant a record of its work that it could be put into a sentence or two. What is certainly known stands in the statistical tables and the appointments as printed in the General Minutes for the year. The Conference for New England met at Lynn July 12. Concerning the session Bishop Asbury's Journal says: "We had a full Conference. Preaching at five, at eleven, and at eight o'clock. Sitting of Conference from half past eight un-

til eleven in the forenoon, and from two until six in the afternoon. We had great order and harmony, and strict discipline withal. Sixteen deacons and eight elders were ordained." The meeting was in a grove near the chapel. For the text of his closing sermon Bishop Asbury chose 1 Thessalonians ii. 6-9, and discoursed on "The Gospel of God"—its content (Christ); its privileges, precepts, power; the apostolic purity imposed upon those who preach it. With this utterance of the venerable Bishop as a new injunction and inspiration, the successors of Lee rode away to their distant fields. The pastoral sermon, which has ever been an event of the Methodist Conference week, has an extraordinary significance and influence; but that also turns on the larger significance of personality—personality revealed by grace.

Dr. Nathan Bangs, writing of the general work of Methodism for this year, says: "Nothing out of the ordinary course of things occurred. The work of God went gradually on. The camp meetings spread more and more in the Central and Northern States, and they were generally attended with increasing interest." The same writer gives an account of one of these meetings held in the latitude of Maine and bearing a close likeness to those at which Soule was accustomed to utter those mighty and torrential discourses which, judged by every account, were characteristic of his ministry at this time. "The meeting," says the historian, "was held in an open field, and the exercises were accompanied by a mighty display of the awakening and converting, as well as the sanctifying, grace of God. On the third day such awful sensations were produced under the preach-

ing that many stout-hearted sinners were bowed before the Lord, while the people of God were filled with joy unspeakable."

The time had come when there was to be a division of the vast territory comprising the presiding elder's "District of Maine," but the incumbent of one of the new overseerships was to realize that there was to be no lessening of his labors. At the session of the New England Conference held in Canaan, New Hampshire, June 12, 1806, the "District of Maine" was divided into eastern and western halves and called respectively the Portland and the Kennebec Districts. The larger and newer district, the Kennebec, fell to Soule, while the Portland District was put under the charge of Oliver Beale. Asbury is credited with saying at the time the appointments were made that he should have considered Soule for the lighter and more agreeable task of superintending the Portland District, only he feared Beale would fail under the strain and hardship of the Kennebec task. Thus again did this master of spirits show his ability to weigh as in his open hands the differing substances of those with whom he dealt. Beale rendered acceptable service on his district, and was in the active work of the itinerancy as late as 1840; but he was never a Joshua Soule.

The Kennebec District contained the old Readfield Circuit; and thus Soule was able to fall back upon, or rather retain, his home at Avon as a base. It is, however, not at all certain that this was the fixed residence of the family during any considerable part of his presiding elder experience in Maine. But wherever the place called home, the faithful wife who shared his

spirit made it bright and cheerful for his returns from long and laborious visitations on the district. By this time two of their children had been born, and the heart and hands of the young mother were filled with new and growing, if still happy, cares.

Dr. Stevens and Bishop McTyeire agree that it was the exceptional prosperity of the Maine District under Soule that induced Asbury to divide it in the way described. The increase in membership had been healthy, though not extraordinary. The growth emphasized was in other directions. Scattered classes had been gathered into compact organizations. New and hopeful preaching places had been established, and houseless societies had been provided with chapels. Most of all, the presence and spirit of Methodism had been recognized from one side of the Province to the other, and the whole had taken tone and color from the persistent energy and personal traits of the presiding elder. The preaching of the rustic master of the pulpit had, in fact, given all Maine a new view of the meaning and uses of the gospel. The knowledge, too, that he was an indigenous product, a fellow-citizen, added a pleasing emphasis to his message and leadership and secured him a ready recognition in every community into which he was called by his labors.

The first year on the Kennebec District ran from June, 1806, to June, 1807. It was not eventful out of the ordinary; if so, the record of such fact has not persisted. But it was the miraculous that became the expected events of those days. The men of the saddle-bags, Bible, and hymn book lived in an atmosphere of fire. Pentecost marked the high commonplace of their

thoughts. It need not be claimed that they possessed a sanctity above the men of the ministry to-day. They perhaps lacked in some important elements; possibly their emotions were sometimes overstrained. As a rule, they were not men of culture; but their faith was constantly and contagiously alive. In that faith they preached and reaped the abundant fruit of their sowing.

It was during this year that Bishop Asbury carried around to the Annual Conferences the proposition to call a convention of traveling elders for the purpose of settling the superintendency of the Church on a permanent basis. The reason for this call was the certainty of the early death of Bishop Whatcoat and the fact that Bishop Coke was permanently engaged abroad. The plan was to strengthen the episcopacy by having this convention of elders elect one or more colleagues for Asbury. The New England Conference, as Bishop Asbury's Journal informs us, concurred in this call, which had originated with the New York Conference, and "seven elders were elected accordingly." The names of these delegates are not given, but it is certain that Soule was among the number chosen. Here had no doubt been given an opportunity for him to display that extraordinary talent which two years later made him the man of the hour; but the convention was destined never to assemble. In the session of the Virginia Conference which followed the whole scheme was given its quietus. The time for settling the constitution of Methodism and the status of its episcopacy was yet two years off. History waited.

The session of the New England Conference for

1807 was held in Boston. The collection for the preachers reached an aggregate of but $800. As this was the last sitting of the year, Bishop Asbury was able to show that there was a deficit of three thousand dollars for the connection. Small enough seems that deficit at this day, but it fell heavily on the needy itinerants; and more than travel and toil indicated what these heroic men and their families were called upon to suffer. But notwithstanding this shortage, the whole line advanced. Seventeen deacons and elders were ordained at Boston. It is now only eighteen years since Jesse Lee, solitary and unheralded, entered New England, in which was not so much as one member in society; and now behold seventeen traveling preachers ordained in a single year!

The Conferences for 1808 were pushed into the early and middle spring so as to clear the way for the General Conference, which had been fixed for May 6. The session of the New England Conference fell on Easter Sunday, April 17. "We wrought in haste, in great order, and in peace through a great deal of business," wrote Asbury in his Journal. After sitting four days, exclusive of Sunday, the Conference was ready to "arise." All eyes were turned toward Baltimore.

The General Conference which was so near at hand was the last of the mass conventions of elders that went under that name. All itinerants of four years' standing were eligible, so that no elections were had for delegates in the Annual Conference. Intense interest centered in the coming session, since it was understood that radical changes would be undertaken, and that it

was to be the last gathering of its character in the Church. A considerable number of the New England preachers, amongst whom was Joshua Soule, prepared to attend this General Conference, which was to sit in Baltimore. Soule had just been transferred from the Kennebec to the Portland District, where, as it fell out, he was destined to spend a full term of four years. He had therefore only to arrange for the removal of his family to Portland and set some preliminary matters in order before beginning his journey southward. Even short journeys were long in those days, and the matter of time had to be calculated with generous margins for miscarriages and delays. The distance from Boston to Baltimore was steady riding for a week. The sea voyage required scarcely less time, and was far more uncertain. From a mere hint in the account of the General Conference session it may be inferred that the New England representatives had gone to Baltimore overland, and that in a body.

The fame of Soule was now no longer provincial only. The General Conference—the first which he attended—brought him into the broader field and service of the connection. "He comes forward," says Bishop McTyeire, "a figure and an influence not to be lost sight of for the next half century."

The history of American Methodism cannot be written, even by unfriendly partisans, without making honorable mention of his name or leaving a wide gap that cannot be filled; for in addition to his power as a gospel preacher, he possessed "the plain, heroic magnitude of mind which shows its presence chiefly in affairs." In the councils of his Church he was what Jefferson and

Hamilton were in the councils of the State. But the story of Soule's relations to the epoch-making General Conference of 1808 is matter for an independent chapter, in which will be undertaken a full study of the constitution and of its author in that historic and destiny-making office.

CHAPTER V.

Writing the Constitution.

The constitution and administrative canons of American Methodism complete a system of polity which at first glance appears to be complicated and involved. A careful study of the whole will, however, serve to remove this impression and show the scheme of Methodist government to be a logical and orderly relation, historically derived. The scheme is indeed the result of persistent evolutional processes which began in the paternally governed Methodist societies in England. Some of the crucial and more important stages of the development of methods and constitutional measures were covered *per saltum;* but still in the personalities of the men who devised and effected these transitions the law of an orderly and logical advance was embodied and justified. In the transition of its polity from largely unwritten to definitely written principles—a preëminent stage of advance—Methodism employed chiefly the acumen and statesmanlike wisdom of one of its younger itinerants, Joshua Soule.

In estimating the significance of the constitution as first drafted by Soule, as also its claims to a high originality, it must be considered, first, how completely it conserves and conforms to previously existing Methodist ideals as well as to those which may be said to have existed prophetically in the Methodist spirit, and yet how boldly divergent from precedents—and, as it proved, from the prevalent sentiment of the body

itself—was the line of its phrasing and inclusions! The mastery of its authorship is evident after the most casual reading, and it was that mastery, written broadly through the whole document, which caused it to prevail over a normally unfriendly majority.

It has been contended that Methodism had a constitution before the restrictive writings of 1808. This contention may well be allowed, and not on the grounds of a mere courtesy of debate. The mass meeting General Conferences legislated and the general superintendency administrated under certain well-understood principles, and were restrained within certain more or less clearly marked bounds. These were dangerously broad, and brought new perils into view at each successive meeting of the ecclesiastical legislature. Nor was the written constitution when it came a complete reduction of these principles. There is still a field of legitimate Methodist action without the constitution, but always subsidiary thereto. The constitution, however, took the highest of the many courses that might have been taken by an act of the unchartered body; but, significantly enough, it took the very one it would not have taken had the majority been left to follow its first and unconstrained impulse. It is forced upon the student that this constitution came at the last moment of opportunity. So far as human judgment can say, another quadrennium would have defeated it. The restrictive enactments ended the tendency toward disintegration.

The consequent manner in which the writing of the Church's constitution was brought about is, after the instrument's intrinsic fitness, the pledge of its binding

force. This fact, however, the men of the epoch-making assembly of 1808, including the father of the constitution himself, did but imperfectly comprehend, as they but imperfectly comprehended the greatness and serviceableness of the thing they had brought to pass. And this also is of logic and agreeable to experience. Time is the true interpreter. The greater a creation, the longer will be the perspective demanded by the eye that is to take it in.

Three persistent and sufficient causes produced in the Church the demand for a written constitution. I shall notice these not in the order of their weight or urgency as considered at the time of action, but in the order of their arising in Methodism as the effects of unfinished devices or the results of long-accepted plans that threatened miscarriage.

The state and status of the episcopacy constituted the question of longest standing in the Church which called for definite treatment in a fundamental writing. But though this was the oldest of the several issues, it gave least concern to the connection. However, it was early seen that both the protection and the regulation of the office would have to be provided for in some enduring way, and this necessity was constantly emphasized by the obtrusion of the other issues.

The American societies had accepted the episcopacy as part of the patrimony bequeathed to them by Wesley. Receiving it in this fashion, they proceeded through their official heads to adopt and adapt it. So that while it may be said that American Methodism received its episcopacy from Wesley, it gave to the office such a status as it chose. Up to 1808 there had

been no turning back from the definition and settlement of the episcopacy in 1784. Indeed, the doctrine of the superintendency then accepted had been repeatedly affirmed. It was not to alter or in any wise modify the episcopal office that a writing was desired, but rather to fix it within the limits of what were believed to be the standards of the New Testament and the demands of expediency. Bishop Asbury was filially trusted by the great body of the preachers, but it was foreseen that another with his lease of power might abuse the office. Also the opposition to Asbury and even to the superintendent's office in the abstract led these same loyal ones to see that without a written settlement the time might come when the office itself could be overthrown. A doubly restrictive rule was the remedy, though the sense of need did not at once bring to a juncture the opportunity and the man destined to produce it.

The state of the episcopacy was with the early Methodists always a more urgent matter than its status. When Coke and Asbury were put at the head of the newly organized Church, in 1784, it was felt that the largest demand for oversight had been met. Had Coke remained in America, this might have been the case, though it is doubtful if he possessed the elements adaptable to episcopal work in the New World. However that might have proved in the end, he soon took his leave and was never reckoned by the Americans as more than a nominal member of their episcopacy. This left Bishop Asbury alone on the face of a continent, and this condition was to be continued for sixteen years. The General Conference of 1800 gave

him a colleague in the person of Richard Whatcoat, who through the feeble six years of his life that remained proved to his associate more a burden than a help. Whatcoat died in the summer of 1806, and at that time Bishop Asbury was so feeble as to make it seem certain that his end was nigh. In view of this distressed state of the episcopacy the New York Conference, as has already been noted, submitted to the other six Conferences for ratification a plan for a delegated assembly to meet in Baltimore on July 4, 1807, "for the express purpose and with full powers to elect, organize, and establish a permanent superintendency, and for no other purpose." This scheme failed by reason of the opposition which it met in the Virginia Conference, led by Jesse Lee. It was fortunate for Methodism that it failed.

Defeated in their scheme for a delegated electoral assembly, the preachers of the New York Conference in 1807 sent around to the Conferences a memorial to be presented to the General Conference to meet in the succeeding year. The chief purpose and content of the document subsist in the following excerpt—viz: "We are deeply impressed with a thorough conviction that a representative or delegated General Conference composed of a specific number on principles of equal representation from the several Annual Conferences would be much more conducive to the prosperity and general unity of the whole body than the present indefinite and numerous body of ministers, collected together unequally from the various Conferences to the great inconvenience of the ministry and injury to the work of God. We therefore present unto you this

memorial, requesting that you will adopt the principle of an equal representation from the Annual Conferences to form in future a delegated General Conference, and that you will establish such rules and regulations as are necessary to carry the same into effect." This memorial was concurred in by the New England, the Western, and the South Carolina Conferences. The great central Conferences of Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Virginia, whose representatives had dominated all previous General Conferences, withheld assent.

The situation in the General Conference when this memorial was presented was this: The memorializing Conferences had forty-eight representatives seated in the body, while the nonconcurring Conferences had eighty-one. The outlook was forbidding and called for a brilliant initiative and for genius of leadership. Providence had haled the man needed from amongst the stuff, but neither he nor the Conference had yet been made aware of his selection.

One strong factor in the situation was the sympathy of Bishop Asbury with the constitutionalists. His potent shadow fell prophetically athwart the untrodden lists. Jesse Lee was also favorable to the idea of a delegated body—in fact, had been the very first to suggest it—but he was confused by the long determinative influence which the Virginians, the Baltimoreans, and the Philadelphians had exercised in the affairs of Methodism. To voluntarily surrender this primacy was no easy matter.

The General Conference met on May 6, and on May 9 the New York memorial came up. As a test of the

sentiment of the Conference touching the memorial Bishop Asbury asked "whether any further regulation in the order of the General Conference" should be undertaken. The vote, a *viva voce* response, was in the affirmative. Stephen G. Roszel, of the Baltimore Conference, moved that a committee to draw up plans "for regulating the General Conference" be appointed. This motion also prevailed, and Bishop Asbury, always alert, and seeing the opportunity of history, moved "that the committee be formed of an equal number from each Annual Conference." This secured a majority of the committee for the New York memorial. Two representatives from each Conference were by motion drafted for the task. The personnel of the committee was as follows—viz., Ezekiel Cooper and John Wilson from the New York Conference, George Pickering and Joshua Soule from the New England Conference, William McKendree and William Burke from the Western Conference, William Phœbus and Josiah Randle from the South Carolina Conference, Phillip Bruce and Jesse Lee from the Virginia Conference, Stephen G. Roszel and Nelson Reed from the Baltimore Conference, and John McClasky and Thomas Ware from the Philadelphia Conference—fourteen in all.

At its first meeting this committee conversed largely on the provisions which the report to the General Conference should contain. The deliberations issued in an agreement to appoint a subcommittee of three to draft the report to be submitted to the General Conference, subject, of course, to modification or emendation by the large committee. The subcommittee con-

sisted of Ezekiel Cooper, Joshua Soule, and Phillip Bruce. Dr. Charles Elliott, who has given a full account of this part of the proceedings in his life of Bishop Roberts, says: "When the subcommittee met, it was agreed, after a full exchange of sentiments, that each should draw up a separate paper comprising the necessary restrictions or regulations in the best way he could, and that each should present his form in writing, and they would then adopt the one deemed best, with such amendments as might be agreed upon." When the subcommittee met for the purpose of comparing their plans, it was found that Mr. Bruce had written nothing, but that both Mr. Cooper and Mr. Soule had brought in carefully drawn plans. After examining the two writings, Mr. Bruce fell in with the plan of Mr. Soule, suggesting only slight emendations. Being overborne in the subcommittee, Cooper agreed to the submission of Soule's draft, although, as it seems, he claimed the right to submit his own to the large committee, and this he did when that committee met to receive the subcommittee's report. "With some slight modifications," Soule's paper was adopted by the large committee, and was then handed to the General Conference. In its original form it was as follows:

Whereas it is of the greatest importance that the doctrine, form of government, and general rules of the United Societies in America be preserved sacred and inviolable; and whereas every prudent measure should be taken to preserve, strengthen, and perpetuate the union of the connection; therefore your committee, upon mature deliberation, have thought it advisable that the third section of the form of Discipline shall be as follows—viz.:

SECTION III.

Of the General Conference.

1. The General Conference shall be composed of delegates from the Annual Conferences.

2. The delegates shall be chosen by ballot without debate, in the Annual Conferences respectively, in the last meeting of the Conference previous to the sitting of the General Conference.

3. Each Annual Conference respectively shall have a right to send seven elders, members of their Conference, as delegates to the General Conference.

4. Each Annual Conference shall have a right to send one delegate in addition to the seven for every ten members belonging to such Conference, over and above fifty; so that if there are sixty members they shall send eight; if seventy, they shall send nine, and so on in proportion.

5. The General Conference shall meet on the first day of May, in the year of our Lord 1812; and thenceforward on the first day of May, once in four years perpetually, at such place or places as shall be fixed on by the General Conference from time to time.

6. At all times when the General Conference is met it shall take two-thirds of the whole number of delegates to form a quorum.

7. One of the general superintendents shall preside in the General Conference; but in case no general superintendent be present, the General Conference shall choose a president *pro tem.*

8. The General Conference shall have full powers to make rules, regulations, and canons for our Church under the following limitations and restrictions—viz.:

The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our articles of religion, nor establish any new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine.

They shall not lessen the number of seven delegates from each Annual Conference nor allow a greater number from

any Annual Conference than is provided for in the fourth paragraph of this section.

They shall not change or alter any part or rule of our government, so as to do away episcopacy, or to destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency.

They shall not revoke or change the general rules of the United Societies.

They shall not do away the privilege of our ministers or preachers of trial by a committee and of an appeal; neither shall they do away the privileges of our members of trial before the society or by a committee and of an appeal.

Neither shall they appropriate the produce of the Book Concern or of the Charter Fund to any purpose other than for the benefit of the traveling, superannuated, supernumerary, and worn-out preachers, their wives, widows, and children.

Provided, nevertheless, that upon the joint recommendation of all the Annual Conferences, then a majority of two-thirds of the General Conference succeeding shall suffice to alter any of the above restrictions.

The draft made by Cooper has not been preserved to us in its entirety, but it is understood that it differed from the plan of Soule chiefly in its treatment of the episcopacy. On that point it read: "They (the General Conference) shall not do away episcopacy nor reduce our ministry to a presbyterial parity." Soule's paragraph not only recognized episcopacy as a fact, but let the plan of our itinerant general superintendency into the foundations and secured it there by a constitutional restriction.

The report on the Soule resolutions was submitted on May 16, seven days after the appointment of the committee, and the General Conference proceeded at once to the consideration of it. A long debate ensued in which Jesse Lee, the original proposer of a delegated General Conference, opposed the resolutions on

the ground of "Conference rights"—that is, the inherited rights of the great Central Conferences or else the rights of the body of the older preachers who predominated in these Conferences. Probably it was on this ground that he "advocated seniority in preference to the election of delegates" to the General Conference. With this contention he, with others, was able to maintain the debate during practically the entire day. The debate promised to go on indefinitely; but near the close of the afternoon session Ezekiel Cooper moved that further consideration of the report be postponed until the Conference should decide another question—namely, whether the Annual Conference should elect the presiding elders or whether the bishops should under the constitution to be adopted continue to appoint them.

Cooper, as his proposed constitution showed, treated the episcopacy as "an abstraction." The real point of his policy, however, looked to the election of seven bishops, one for each of the Annual Conferences. Four or five days before this date he had offered such a motion, only to see it promptly voted down. Now he renewed the old clamor—originating with O'Kelly—for an elective presiding eldership. It was Soule, assisted by his associate delegate, George Pickering, who defeated Cooper's scheme for seven bishops, which, had it carried, would have meant a diocesan episcopacy. He now set himself to defeat the scheme for an elective presiding eldership. After more than half a day had been spent on the Cooper resolution, Soule moved the previous question; but the motion was lost, and the debate was prolonged into the morning session of the

third day. At an opportune moment Soule interposed a second time with a motion that the vote be taken, and this time his point was gained, when the vote stood fifty-two for the election of presiding elders and seventy-three against. Thus was this important question settled; and though may efforts have been made to change the rule, it has remained intact in the constitution for one hundred and two years.

Immediately following the defeat of this measure in the General Conference William McKendree, who had four days before been elected, was, by Bishop Asbury, ordained to the office of a bishop. The defeated advocates of an elective presiding eldership stood about him while he assumed the solemn and responsible duties of a bishop. He was to have them standing about him many a day thereafter; but the young Maine man who had that day cleared a way for him to enter his office was to remain his helper and abettor through the long struggle.

But notwithstanding this initial success, the adoption of the constitution was by no means assured. On Wednesday afternoon it was moved "that the vote on the first resolution of the committee of fourteen be taken by ballot." That resolution was: "The General Conference shall be composed of delegates from the Annual Conferences." When the ballots were counted, it was found that the measure was lost by the slender majority of seven votes. The result was, however, decisive; the constitution was lost. The consequences came near being serious. Great excitement prevailed, for the constitutionalists attributed their defeat to the three central Conferences, and chiefly to the Balti-

more and Philadelphia contingents. "The New England delegates asked leave of absence," says Bishop McTyeire, who undoubtedly received this information from the lips of Bishop Soule himself. The Western delegates threatened to ride away to their circuits, while others wept or sat with shadowed faces contemplating what seemed the end of connectional Methodism. The spirit of Soule was sad, but his lips spake no word while he awaited the final outcome. Bishops Asbury and McKendree, after much persuasion, prevailed on the dissatisfied delegates to remain over a day to see if an understanding could not be reached.

After the lapse of four days, on Monday, May 23, the vote to fix the time and place of meeting for the next General Conference was called. Action on this motion was postponed until it could be determined who should compose the General Conference. This was a motion of virtue by means of which the constitution was diplomatically introduced as a new question. Enoch George (afterwards bishop), seconded by Stephen G. Roszel, moved "that the General Conference shall be composed of one member for every five members of each Annual Conference," and the motion carried by a decisive majority. Soule then moved that the method of selecting delegates in the Annual Conferences should be "either by seniority or choice." In this manner he silenced the opposition of Jesse Lee and gained in him a powerful ally for the future stages of the contest.

From this point the current of action ran smoothly, and with unimportant changes the original draft of Soule became by legal indorsement of the General Con-

ference the constitution of the Church. For the use of the critical reader who may desire to make a comparison of the two forms of this historic document the text of the constitution as inserted in the Discipline of 1808 is here reproduced:

Ques. 2. Who shall compose the General Conference, and what are the regulations and powers belonging to it?

Ans. 1. The General Conference shall be composed of one member for every five members of each Annual Conference, to be appointed either by seniority or choice at the discretion of such Annual Conference, yet so that such representatives shall have traveled at least four full calendar years from the time that they are received on trial by an Annual Conference, and are in full connection at the time of holding the Conference.

2. The General Conference shall meet on the first day of May, in the year of our Lord 1812, in the city of New York, and thenceforward on the first day of May once in four years perpetually in such place or places as shall be fixed on by the General Conference from time to time. But the general superintendents with or by the advice of the Annual Conferences or, if there be no general superintendent, all the Annual Conferences respectively shall have power to call a General Conference, if they judge it necessary, at any time.

3. At all times when the General Conference meet it shall take two-thirds of the representatives of all the Annual Conferences to make a quorum for transacting business.

4. One of the general superintendents shall preside in the General Conference; but in case no general superintendent be present, the General Conference shall choose a president *pro tempore.*

5. The General Conference shall have full power to make rules and regulations for our Church under the following limitations and restrictions—viz.:

1. The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our Articles of Religion, nor establish any new stand-

ards or rules of doctrine contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine.

2. They shall not allow of more than one representative for every five members of the Annual Conference, nor allow of a less number than one for every seven.

3. They shall not change or alter any part or rule of our government so as to do away episcopacy or destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency.

4. They shall not revoke or change the general rules of the United Societies.

5. They shall not do away the privileges of our ministers or preachers of trial by committee and of an appeal. Neither shall they do away the privileges of our members of trial before the society or by a committee and of an appeal.

6. They shall not appropriate the produce of the Book Concern nor the chartered fund to any purpose other than for the benefit of the traveling, supernumerary, superannuated, and worn-out preachers, their wives, widows, and children.

Provided, nevertheless, that upon the joint recommendation of all the Annual Conferences, then a majority of two-thirds of the General Conferences succeeding shall suffice to alter any of the above restrictions.

Thus was finished the work destined doubtless to stand through centuries and to serve as a bond of the most numerous Protestant body in the Western Hemisphere. Not a few amendments have been made to its provisions, but the strong and sinewy language of the original writing remains and gains in perspicacity and force every year. It can be safely said that no Methodist in the world ever erected so great a single monument to his memory as the constitution has proved to the memory of Joshua Soule. Dr. Charles Elliott, who lived in a time before the full significance of the constitutional restrictions had appeared to the Church, said: "To a very considerable extent we owe to Bishop

Soule the restrictive regulations—or rather the constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church—which exhibits a degree of wisdom and prudent foresight that characterizes men of the first mental powers. In fact, those who know Bishop Soule would expect from him the wise deliberation necessary to produce such a measure."

Of Bishop Soule's powers and foresight as they were brought to bear on the writing of this document, Bishop McTyeire says: "One obvious advantage of Mr. Soule's theory will be accepted as an offset to many disadvantages: it promotes connectionalism. It ties and bands the Churches and Conferences together. He succeeded in getting adopted the practice and rule which still holds in the Church—of being scarce of bishops, making but few and giving them a wide and equal interest in all the Conferences and all the Conferences an equal interest in them. It was a breadth of mission which suited well his own elevated nature and ample powers when in time he was called to it."

As a view of the even broader results and pledges of this constitution I may give here the opinion concerning it expressed by an eminent Wesleyan preacher of the last century, the Rev. Dr. Dixon, who visited the continent as fraternal messenger from the Wesleyan Conference in 1848. He says: "Here, then, we have the Magna Charta of Methodism in the States. This document indicates the good sense and the diligent forethought of those who framed it. We see from it that the American Methodists are no revolutionists, and that they desire to escape such a catastrophe. The legislative power is not at liberty to alter

anything deemed fundamental. This limits the functions of the assembled ministers within what may be considered a settled and fully recognized constitution. This constitution supposes various points as already settled, to which all agree, and which are not to be disturbed. The doctrines of the Church are amongst these fundamental principles. Here innovation generally begins, when Churches decline. The loss of vital religion always causes the truths of the evangelical system to become tasteless. . . . The age and circumstances favor this sort of adventurous spirit. It must consequently be considered a wise arrangement, that the great truths of the evangelical system embodied in their articles of religion are not to be altered."

At the session of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church held in Baltimore in May, 1908, the one hundredth anniversary of the adoption of the constitution was duly and appropriately celebrated. On that occasion Rev. Charles W. Smith, D.D., editor of the *Pittsburg Christian Advocate,* who was some days later elected to the episcopacy, read a very ably written paper on "The Constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church," in which he used this language: "When, therefore, we discuss the constitution as it is, we are considering the document substantially as it came from the hands of its framers. This is a remarkable fact, and shows the wisdom and foresight of the fathers and the conservatism of their sons."

The writer of this biography also had the honor to deliver one of the addresses on that historic occasion,

being the invited representative of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. He may modestly say that he took occasion to exalt the name and memory of that *one* of "the fathers" to whom the chief honor of framing the constitution is due. Although this man out of whose hands the book of the law departed not was a son of the northernmost North of our land, it seemed, and was accepted as fitting, because of his happy identification with the children of the South, that a Southern Methodist—one from the southernmost South—should on that great occasion stand to remind the universal house of Episcopal Methodism of its indebtedness to him for that bond which has united us more than all things else save the grace of God alone.

CHAPTER VI.

An Intercalary Period.

A surviving member of Bishop Soule's family has recalled that in his later years he was accustomed to refer with conscious satisfaction to the fact that he had preserved nothing which had been written concerning himself either to his praise or disparagement. He discouraged the writing of biographical sketches of himself during his lifetime, and the matter for the few which were written was evidently furnished by other hands than his. I reach this conclusion after having examined all such sketches of which I can hear, and find them built up around a few identical facts drawn from a common repository. At no period of his life was he provident of letters or other written documents that might have served as side lights on his life story or even on the larger history of his times. Perhaps the Church in all modern times has not seen a man so intrinsically great who was so indifferent to popular applause or criticism or who sought less after personal glory and fame.

The secret of the absence from this biography of the lighter and perhaps more humanlike details of his story is now an open one between me and my readers; but we may mutually congratulate ourselves that the great points in the life of this man of deeds are like a city set upon a hill which cannot be hid.

The four years which Soule spent as presiding elder of the Portland District, although they brought him

fully before the Church and made him the leader and lawgiver of Methodism, are almost as nearly recordless, so far as concerns the details of his district work, as were the years spent on Union River Circuit and Nantucket Island. But in studying what has come to our knowledge touching those years the man moving in the midst of it bulks with the outlines of Saul in the shadowy interior of his tent.

The New England Conference for 1809 met at Monmouth, Province of Maine, and within the bounds of the Portland District. Soule was therefore the chief host of the assembly. "We sat closely at work," observed Bishop Asbury in his Journal. Bishop McKendree was also present, it being his first visit to that quarter of the continent. A significant entry made by Asbury in his Journal of even date with the one above noted points to the fact that his colleague took a prominent part in the administration. McKendree's face being new to all the people and to most of the preachers, his coming naturally aroused much interest. His preaching and presidency greatly impressed the Conference and the public. Three thousand people were in daily attendance, and eighty itinerants reported on the work. There were twenty-eight ordinations to the two orders.

It was now that Bishop Asbury fully realized the vastness and difficulties of the work in upper New England, and especially in Maine. It was now also that he lamented his lack of knowledge concerning both the men and the field. Asbury's superintendency had from the beginning been one suggested by a thorough familiarity with the itinerants and their charges, but his

knowledge at last failed to keep pace with the recruited ranks or the new reaches across which they moved. Bishop McKendree had, however, already brought into being the bishop's cabinet—a logical factor in Methodist polity—and was relying upon the presiding elders for a knowledge of the local fields and the men employed upon them which, because of the rapid growth of the connection, no bishop could acquire. It was now that the true and constitutional ideal of the presiding eldership began to emerge. McKendree was the Church statesman who opened to it the door of historic and prophetic usefulness. Soule was quick to take the statesmanlike view of it. Between him and McKendree there existed already a strong personal attachment. A confidence sprang up and grew steadily until it became a passionate friendship. This also was of providence, as of the logic of likes, for they twain being knit together in unity of purpose were called in after years to conduct the affairs of Methodism through the most trying stages of its history. "These two," says Bishop McTyeire, "stand related as were Elijah and Elisha." The mantle of McKendree when he ascended fell upon Soule.

From 1799, when he was with Timothy Merritt on Portland Circuit, to the end of his quadrennium on the Portland District—nearly fourteen years—Joshua Soule was closely identified with the city of Portland, and came to be one of its best-known and most influential citizens. During his later lifetime the popular mind thought of his New England history only in connection with the metropolis of his native State. I have the recollection of having consulted at least one cyclo-

pedia of biography that gave Portland as the place of his birth. The impress of his large-spirited activity and sane thinking cannot have wholly passed from the life and manners of the place where he so long had his home. In the life and thought of that city there is to-day much with which the memory of the best and proudest might be happily associated. Epictetus asked for a city of wise men; but a truer as well as a more sympathetic oracle promised not only the salvation but the sanctification of a city in which even a leaven of righteous men might, peradventure, be found. The reputation of the State of Maine for sobriety and high ethical ideals may well be the renown of the men who digged about the roots of its life when these roots were tender and responsive to care.

There was a fellowship of great spirits in the work in this field during this period. Of it Dr. Bangs says: "Through the labors of such men as the Rev. Messrs. Elijah Hedding, Joshua Soule, Thomas Branch, John Brodhead, Elijah R. Sabin, and Oliver Beale, who were this year the presiding elders in the New England Conference, Methodism was gradually and in some places powerfully advancing, both in the older and in some of the newer settlements. While Thomas Branch was leading forward the young men under his care in Vermont, Elijah Hedding was equally indefatigable in exploring the settlements and villages among the hills and valleys of New Hampshire; and the Province of Maine was blessed with the labors of Joshua Soule and Oliver Beale, whose example in the work committed to their care stimulated the preachers on their respective districts to activity and diligence."

Another historian of Methodism, Dr. Stevens, calls attention to the fact that Soule during the time of his presidency over the Portland District had under his immedate direction such men as Martin Ruter, Epaphras Kibby, Ebenezer Blake, Charles Virgin, Daniel Fillmore, Samuel Hillman, "and others of familiar name in the New England Churches." These were all of one mind. "They had hard struggles, but glorious victories in spreading the truth through the wilds of Maine."

Martin Ruter, of honorable mention in the above list, had a still more adventurous experience as a missionary to the new republic of Texas nearly thirty years after this. The decisive battle of San Jacinto, fought on April 21, 1836, gave independence and English ideals to a country which had been Latin both in faith and government. The patriots published an instant welcome to Christian missionaries, and the Methodists responded without delay. Martin Ruter, then President of Alleghany College, was appointed superintendent of the newly planned work, with Littleton Fowler and Robert Alexander as assistants. Alexander and Fowler entered the republic some time in advance of their chief, and began at once to lay the foundations of what has become the imperial Methodism of the State of Texas. Ruter followed some months later, preached before the Texas Congress at Houston, and after traversing the field planted a number of stations advantageously, and also "devised liberal things for education." Full of enthusiastic faith in the future of the work to which he had been called, he started in 1829 to meet his family and remove them

to the republic, but was seized with a fever while on his journey and "made his honored grave in the mission field." An educational foundation later known as "Martin Ruter College" and still a later known as "Soule University," both being in Washington County, Texas, were the origin of what is now the Southwestern University at Georgetown. Thus has the intellectual and spiritual fellowship of those two early Maine colaborers found an enduring memorial in a land and amongst a people of whom neither of them at that time so much as dreamed.

The General Conference of 1812 came on about one month before the close of Soule's fourth year on the Portland District. At the session of the New England Conference held at Barnard, Vermont, in the previous year the new order under the constitution was observed, the legal quota of delegates to sit in the general body being returned. A count of the membership of the Conference showed that it was entitled to nine representatives. Joshua Soule was the fourth in order of those elected. The name of George Pickering led the list. This Conference also named certain reserve delegates, that the body might suffer no diminishing of its legal voting or electoral influence through the sickness or chance absence of any of its principal delegates. The memory of the long preponderance of the central Conferences in the general sitting was fresh in the minds of the border itinerants. There was still a heavy mass of votes in these central Conferences, and the old temptation to rule by arithmetic might return. The men of the North were resolved to take no chance that could be successfully anticipated. It is

likely that Pickering and Soule originated this reserve list. At any rate, it is to be credited to the New England Conference, and quickly became the rule throughout the connection, and is now invariably observed in both branches of the Church.

The General Conference of 1812 tested the strength of the constitution; but the fears of many that it might develop weak places in that document and issue in confusion were not realized. Neither were met the expectations of others that, in spite of it, the long-discussed scheme for an elective presiding eldership would be put through. An effort, led by Jesse Lee and Nicholas Snethen, was indeed made to secure the passage of such a measure, but it went the way of its predecessors. Two days were given to the debate—a profitless indulgence, for every member of the Conference was perfectly familiar from the first with the arguments to be set forth, pro and con. The two bishops were known to be committed against the measure. They looked to Soule, who, impelled by his own knowledge of, and his interest in, the constitution, had taken a strong position in the negative, though several of his Conference colleagues were against him. Knowing that the vote would likely fix the issue permanently, each side hesitated to take the step of closing; but finally the question was put and lost, though not by a vote which its advocates were willing to accept as finally decisive. The issue, therefore, remained in the Church a source of unrest for nearly a score of years thereafter.

In this session of the General Conference Soule was made the chairman of a committee appointed to con-

sider that part of Bishop McKendree's address which referred to the status and relation of local preachers. In the General Conference of 1816 he was intrusted with the same chairmanship. The deliberations on this matter during those two years resulted in settling the office of local preacher in that relation which, with slight modifications, it has retained to the present day.

In the debates on the temperance measures proposed at this session Soule also took a prominent part and assumed an aggressive attitude in the demands which he and his protagonists made for stringent measures against both people and preachers who distilled grain into spirits. It is certain that Neal Dow and his fellow-prohibitionists had in him a worthy antecessor. Of the part which he took in the burning issue of this and the succeeding session—the presiding elder question—it is reserved to us to speak later.

On June 18, 1812, the United States declared war against England. In some quarters of the connection the preachers and their flocks were as much distressed by this war as their earlier brethren had been by the conditions resulting from the war of the Revolution. The results were felt chiefly along the Canadian border and in the provinces of the Dominion. The circuits in that county were cut off from the American connection, and during the times of isolation conditions developed in the societies across the border which largely influenced the final separation of the Canadian Methodists from their American affiliations.

Two days after the declaration of hostilities by the national government the New England Conference met at Lynn, Massachusetts, the city which had served

Jesse Lee as a base when he made his first advances, in 1795, into the Province of Maine. Particularly happy memories of the Methodists clustered around this place. The local class or congregation was thrifty and large-minded, and from the material side as well as for other considerations it was well regarded by the preachers as a home. If there were any "high steeple" churches in New England at that day, the one at Lynn headed the list.

To the pastorate of this Church Joshua Soule was appointed by the Conference to which it had been host. A chapel had been begun by the Methodists in Lynn as early as 1791. It was still unfinished during the visit of Bishop Asbury to that place the following year, but that far-sighted leader was impressed even then with the importance of the station as a strategic base. Of it he wrote: "I was agreeably surprised to find a house raised for the Methodists. As a town I think Lynn the perfection of beauty. It is situated on a plain under a range of craggy hills and open to the sea. There is here a promising society and exceedingly well-behaved congregation. . . . Here we shall make a firm stand, and from this central point, from Lynn, shall the light of Methodism and of truth radiate through the State."

The words of Asbury had been proven prophetic, and the chapel built in Lynn under the direction of Jesse Lee had housed more than one session of the Conference in which bold and successful plans of conquest had been laid. The Church was nearly a quarter of a century old. The congregation had steadily grown in numbers and importance, and was now to be

served by the most renowned preacher in New England and one toward whom the eyes of all Methodism were turning. A scheme was at once put on foot for building a new house of worship, one that would in some measure express the stage of growth and importance to which the congregation had attained. This enterprise was carried forward to success by Soule, and on the 3d of June, 1813, he preached the dedicatory sermon.

We have no description of this house and no certain means of determining whether or not it might have been tabooed by Bishop Asbury for its excessive fineness. In this very year, while on his journey through New England, he wrote: "O rare steeple houses, bells (organs by and by)! These things are against me and contrary to the simplicity of Christ. We have made a stand in the New England Conference against steeples and pews, and shall possibly give up the houses unless the pews are taken out and the houses made sure to us exclusively." What if that holy man could walk through his diocese to-day!

It was during this year, and only two days before the dedication of the church at Lynn, that an event occurred which deeply stirred the spirit of Soule and served to revive mightily his sea king instincts. The naval war with Great Britain had reached its height, and a series of tragic events were taking place along the northeastern Atlantic Coast. Capt. James Lawrence, who late in the month of May had achieved a brilliant victory over the British in the capture of the ship of war Hornet, was given command of the fine frigate Chesapeake and ordered to cruise in the neigh-

borhood of Boston. On June 1 he fell in with the British frigate Shannon off Nahant, where occurred the memorable sea fight in which the gallant Lawrence lost both his ship and his life. From the coast of High Rock Joshua Soule witnessed the engagement. While the dying Lawrence, prostrate on the deck of his vessel, was crying, "Don't give up the ship; fight her till she sinks," the high-browed offspring of ancient sea kings was exclaiming: "I would give my right arm rather than that flag should come down." Now it happened that Soule and Lawrence were of one age, both having been born in the year 1781. But for the providence which thirty years before shifted the home of the Soules from the Bristol coast of Maine to Sandy River Valley, the man on the top of High Rock might have been the dying master of the shattered ship in the offing!

After only one year in the pastorate, Soule was again called to the presiding eldership and back to the Kennebec District, his old-time diocese. Bidding farewell to his pleasant surroundings at Lynn, he faced about and returned to ride again in month-long absences from his family, but to know, as before, a compensation of joy in service and sacrifice.

In 1806, when he was first appointed to this district, it contained nine circuits. Now the list showed eleven, and they averaged for each an extent of territory much greater than that which falls to the typical modern district. In this field he was to spend three years, and thus fill up an intercalary period, the years which fell between his writing of the constitution, the point of the outgoing of his name to be immortal, and the hour of

his call to leave for good his provincial sphere and enter upon the stages of an ever-widening service to connectional Methodism.

On December 24, 1814, the Treaty of Ghent was signed which ended the war between America and Britain, though the memorable battle of New Orleans, because of a lack of means of rapid communication, was fought twenty-one days later.

With the year 1815 began the new era of American national greatness. Methodism, with the other larger moral forces of the land, felt the impulse of the new life and prepared to enter the widening doors of opportunity.

But a shadow now fell, lengthening and deepening, over the house of the people called Methodists. Francis Asbury, the patriarch and leader, the tenderly beloved and revered bishop of Methodism, was dying. All his sons saw this and looked with tearful reverence upon his pale features and tottering form. In July of this year he visited for the last time the New England Conference. He was unable to preside, but laid hands upon the heads of those who were to be sent forth to teach the Word and premonish. Sad farewells were taken of him by those who should see his face no more.

At this session delegates were chosen to sit in the General Conference to meet in the city of Baltimore on the 1st of May in the coming year. The delegation was led by George Pickering and Joshua Soule, in the order named. This was Soule's last year in New England. At the General Conference he stood forth in the great controversy which marked the ses-

sion as the defender of what had been made the fundamental law of the Church. By reason of the effective way in which he bore himself and expounded his views he filled the whole eye of his brethren, and was in their thoughts separated to the destinies and service of their larger history. Upon the first stages of the story of that service we are now about to enter.

CHAPTER VII.

Counseling the Rulers.

The question of the presiding eldership in its relations to the episcopacy was one with which the name of Joshua Soule became closely associated during a period of nearly or quite twenty years—the period of its discussion and final settlement. Therefore it seems well to give an entire section of this work to a consideration of it and of the extent to which the bishops and other leaders of the connection looked to Soule for counsel and help in maintaining the constitutional view of the office as also that of the office of the episcopacy.

The presiding eldership is the gauge of the itinerancy which is itself the pivot wheel of operative Methodism. It is an 'integrant of the Wesleyan episcopacy and a complementing function of its administration. The Wesleyan general superintendency and the presiding eldership originated in the selfsame act of paternal selection, and were commissioned in complementing offices of consecration. When Mr. Wesley named Thomas Coke to be general superintendent of the Church soon to be organized in North America, he also named Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to be elders assistant to him and his colleague, also paternally selected. When Wesley and Creighton consecrated Coke to the general superintendency, they also consecrated Whatcoat and Vasey to the presbyterate. When the General Conference of 1784, acting on its

own account, elected Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury to the general superintendency and thus ordered Asbury's consecration to that office, it also elected twelve of the preachers—the whole body being unordained—to the eldership, that they might "visit the Quarterly Conferences and administer the ordinances." The significance of the relations thus established between the general superintendency and the presiding eldership was not fully appreciated in the beginning; but history has abundantly emphasized the providence which ordered the interdependence of the two as complementing functions of the episcopacy. The office of elder, even from New Testament times, has carried with it the idea of pastoral authority. The general superintendent is but an elder clothed with the larger administrative powers of the eldership delegated from the general body of the order. The presiding elder is a presbyter who serves as an official nexus between the general superintendency and a given group of itinerants. This was implied in Mr. Wesley's appointment of Whatcoat and Vasey. It was also implied in the election of the limited number of twelve elders by the Christmas Conference, for it will not be contended that these twelve were the only men in the Conference worthy of ordination. Later ordination to both the diaconate and the presbyterate came as the result of graduation. But at first the General Conference dealt with the presiding elder and not with the presbyterate in its normal relation.

The General Conference did not create the general superintendency, nor yet the presiding eldership. Both were accepted as expedients brought forward by those

providential conditions which preceded and abetted the organization of ecclesiastical Methodism. But a charter of these offices being at length written into the constitution of Methodism, they took on, and still retain, the character of fundamentals.

Bishop Soule, the author of the constitution, became the champion and expounder of the doctrine of the episcopacy construed as involving the unity of the general superintendency and the presiding eldership. He held with conviction and clearness of statement the view that if the presiding eldership—after the selection of its incumbent had advisedly and constitutionally been made a duty of the general superintendency—were made elective by the Annual Conference the constitutional ideal and effectiveness of the episcopacy would disappear. For though the General Conference did elect the first presiding elders, it was only to legally institute the system. Half the force of the vote applied to their election to orders, which latter prerogative thereafter passed to the Annual Conference, and the power expressed in the former was never again invoked. Moreover, the general superintendents, even in that first instance, appointed the "president elders," as they were then called, to their places as heads of groups of circuits.

The presiding eldership represents, on the one side, the body of the itinerancy, and on the other the responsible general superintendency. For their part the itinerants have the election of the presbyter to his functions, while for its part the general superintendency has the naming of the officer who is to bring that part of the itinerancy which he represents into the episcopal

counsels. The general superintendency does not in itself complete the ideal of the episcopacy, but that ideal is completed in conjunction with the constitutionally created presiding eldership.

No question in Methodism has had a history of more constant controversy than has that of the presiding eldership. In the beginning of Methodism Mr. Wesley appointed his preachers and helpers to labor at those times and in those places which his Christian judgment determined to be best and most to the advantage of the kingdom of Christ. This authority he gave to his general assistants in America, to Boardman, to Rankin, and to Asbury. The same authority passed to the general superintendents, or bishops, ordained by him and commissioned under his letters. The Christmas Conference confirmed this authority and fixed it in a formal question and answer which were printed in the first Discipline of the Church as follows—viz.: "Question, What is the duty of a bishop? Answer: To preside as moderator in our Conferences, to fix the appointments of the preachers for the several circuits, etc." That under the rule this authority extended to the appointment of presiding elders there was never any question. Nor was there any issue made on the general policy of putting the power of appointment in the hands of the episcopacy until the meeting of the second General Conference, in 1792. At that sitting James O'Kelly introduced the following resolution—to wit:

Resolved, That after the bishop appoints the preachers at the Conference to their several circuits, if any one think himself injured by the appointment, he shall have liberty to ap-

peal to the Conference and state his objections; and if the Conference approve of his objections, the bishop shall appoint him to another circuit.

After a debate of three days, and one exhaustive of every content of the measure, it was lost by a decisive majority. The defeat of his scheme so dissatisfied O'Kelly that he immediately withdrew from the Conference, and soon afterwards set up the Church of the "O'Kellyites," or Republican Methodists.

A decisive vote of confidence being thus early given the episcopacy, the ghost of autocracy remained laid for nearly a decade. Strangely enough, the next appearance of it was with Dr. Coke as sponsor. At the General Conference of 1800, when it became clear that a third bishop would be elected, possessing himself a strong bias for the new Wesleyan method of appointment, Bishop Coke brought in the following recommendation—viz.: "The new bishop, whenever he presides in an Annual Conference in the absence of Bishop Asbury, shall bring the stations of the preachers into the Conference and read them that he may hear what the Conference has to say upon each station."

After a brief consultation, this motion was withdrawn by the mover. Shortly after the withdrawal of the recommendation another was submitted to the effect that the Conference appoint a committee of three or four to assist the new bishop "in stationing the preachers." In this suggestion the "bishop's cabinet" was distinctly prophesied; but being haled from the wrong angle, it also was rejected. The early history of the presiding eldership describes a case of arrested development. It came into shape slowly, but a law of

logic and providence prevented it from getting into ineffective relations with the general superintendency, whose nascence was its own.

The next stage of this controversy we have already described in the story of the adoption of the constitution in 1808. It will be recalled that the presiding elder question emerged at the moment that instrument was being put before the General Conference for its consideration and indorsement. The vote was adverse, but the verdict against an elective presiding eldership did not prevent the advocates of the measure from bringing it forward again in 1812. The majority registered against it at this latter sitting was so slender as to raise the belief that it would carry in the General Conference of 1816. The contest was therefore renewed at that sitting with great determination, and this brings us up to the date at which the course of this biography has arrived.

The second delegated General Conference convened in Baltimore, Maryland, May 11, 1816. A shadow of melancholy rested on the opening scenes because of the death of Bishop Asbury, which event had occurred but one month before. After the lapse of a week, however, the contest on "the main question" was opened. On Tuesday, May 7, Samuel Merwin, of the New York Conference, moved that in answer to the question, "How shall the presiding elders be chosen and appointed?" the Discipline should read: "At an early period in each Annual Conference the bishop shall nominate a person for each district that is to be supplied, and the Conference shall without debate proceed in the choice, the person nominated being absent;

and if the person nominated be not chosen according to nomination, the bishop shall nominate two others, one of whom it shall be the duty of the Conference to choose." And in answer to the question, "By whom shall the preachers be appointed to their stations?" Merwin moved that the answer should read: "By the bishop with the advice and counsel of the presiding elders." The Conference after sitting at intervals during three days as a committee of the whole on this matter had reached no conclusion when Nathan Bangs proposed an amendment, which was accepted by Merwin. The Bangs amendment was as follows: "The bishop at an early period of the Annual Conference shall nominate an elder for each district, and the Conference shall without debate either confirm or reject such nomination. If the person or persons so nominated be not elected by the Conference, the bishop shall nominate two others for each vacant district, one of whom shall be chosen. And the presiding elder so elected and appointed shall remain in office four years, unless dismissed by the mutual consent of the bishop and Conference; but no presiding elder shall be removed from office during the term of four years unless the reasons for such removal be stated to him in the presence of the Conference, which shall decide without debate on his case."

After a further spirited discussion, the amendment was put to the house and lost, as was also the main question. But the hope was still strong that at a future day (and, as it proved, at the next General Conference) the issue could be successfully revived. To provide for the realization of this hope the friends of

the defeated measure proposed at a later stage of the session this unusual pronouncement—namely: "Resolved that the motion relative to the election and appointment of presiding elders is not contrary to the constitution of our Church." The Conference disallowed the judgment; but as the result did not amount to either a constitutional amendment or a supreme court decision, the question remained an open one.

Concerning the determinative influences in the debates and the leadership of this question, Bishop McTyeire, who knew this history both from the record and from a close and confidential intimacy with Bishop Soule, has put American Methodism in possession of information that otherwise might have been lost. In his address delivered at the funeral of Bishop Soule he says: "Mr. Soule's theory was that the presiding elders were in their executive character the officers and vicegerents of the bishop, and the bishop must have the untrammeled selection of his staff. As *preachers* our itinerant system could no more allow the Annual Conference to give the presiding elders their appointed fields of labor than to the circuit preachers theirs. Under such administration he held that the episcopacy and the itinerancy would both break down. Good and great men were on the other side—Hedding and Waugh (afterwards bishops) and others. Bishop Roberts was understood to favor their views."

Out of the fullness of his knowledge gained through the superior opportunity furnished by his relation to the leader and chief actor in this history, Bishop McTyeire adds: "In 1816 Mr. Soule took a prom-

inent part in the discussion. The friends of this specious measure happily did not succeed, and to him is attributed its defeat. Bishop McKendree looked to him, and now leaned on him to uphold his constitutional, conservative policy."

The greatness and value of Mr. Soule's service to the Church and its leaders in this matter are by no means described in the story of his connection with the debates and actions of the General Conference of 1816. From this time on, until after his second election to the episcopacy, he stood in the front of the contest for the vindication of the constitution. Indeed, the lists were constantly opening to him well nigh to the close of his heroic and illustrious life; but we shall trace each stage in its chronological order.

In the strenuous session of 1816 Soule was made chairman of the Committee of Safety. The duty of this committee, which consisted of three members, was to take into consideration that part of Bishop McKendree's address which referred to the state of the Church, the doctrinal soundness of the preaching being done in the connection, and the administration of Church discipline. The text of the report of this committee may be found printed in many American Methodist histories, copied from the General Conference Journal. But I have in my possession at this writing what I take to be one of the two or three original copies of that report made at the time of the committee's sitting or very soon thereafter. It is dated 1816, and is in Bishop Soule's handwriting and signed by his own hand as chairman. The manuscript contains twenty-four pages, and, in addition to the report of the

Committee of Safety, contains the report of the Committee on Episcopacy, also in Soule's handwriting. The same is true of a copy of the address of the General Conference to the London Missionary Society touching the differences which had arisen between the American and English Conferences in regard to the stations in Canada. Three forms for title deeds or indentures to secure the hold of Church property also appear in the manuscript. One of these is nearly identical with the form appearing in the Discipline securing titles to "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America;" while one of the others is a deed drawn for special use in the State of Maryland, where, as it would seem, there were peculiarities of statute; while the third was drawn as a guide to those who sought to make bequests of property for Church uses. The indentures are each in a different hand, in each case evidently by a professional copyist who neatly and carefully transcribed from an original.

The interest in this paper, altogether aside from its antiquity, is the light which it throws on the ministry and catholic thoughtedness of the provincial presiding elder. An official visitor in a city in which he was nearly a stranger, he found time to consult attorneys and recorders and make or have made copies of safe and convenient property deeds, and not only to neatly duplicate the report of his own committee but those of others also. To say what share he had, if any, in shaping these other reports could of course be only conjecture. The suggestion is not ventured that his advice was even sought by the heads of other committees; but

from what we know of the estimation in which he was held by all it is not the least unlikely that he was in their confidence while they worked; and this manuscript, could it speak other words than those written upon it, might tell us an interesting story. How it, with a few other precious fragments, escaped the general destruction of the Bishop's papers cannot now be explained. It has come down in a rare and priceless collection of autograph letters and original official writings dating back to Asbury. The history of the preservation and uses of these papers is itself an interesting one. The original nucleus passed from Asbury to McKendree probably a few months before the death of the former, in 1816. The depository of this nucleus during the remaining years of McKendree's life seems to have been the home of his brother, Dr. James McKendree, in Sumner County, Tennessee. After the death of Bishop McKendree, in 1835, the original papers, with many additions, passed to the hands of Bishop Soule, who was to McKendree another self, as McKendree had been to Asbury. Bishop Soule, as we have seen, was improvident of records, especially such as bore on his own life and work, yet the papers inherited from his senior in office were carefully preserved. To these papers Bishop Paine had access while writing the "Life of McKendree." After the death of Bishop Soule, the accumulation passed to Bishop McTyeire, who drew heavily upon it in writing his "History of Methodism." The various records included in it were also consulted by Dr. A. H. Redford in writing his "Organization of the Methodist Episcopal

Church, South." From Bishop McTyeire to Bishop Tigert this all but "Nibelungen hoard" descended, and information was extracted from it by the latter in the preparation of his "Constitutional History of Methodism." I have had the good fortune to have this entire collection in my possession while writing the memoirs of Bishops Asbury and Soule.

CHAPTER VIII.

A Manifold Stewardship.

The minute in the Journal of the General Conference of 1816 devoted to reporting the electoral vote has a familiar and modern look. It informs us that Enoch George and Robert Richford Roberts were elected Bishops and that Joshua Soule was elected Book Steward (publishing agent and editor of the *Methodist Magazine*), with Thomas Mason as assistant. From this time forward the connectional elections become a center of interest and forelooking in the General Conference. How much the purely electoral sentiment has influenced the fortunes of the Wesleyan movement in America it would of course be impossible to say; but that it has been a constant attrition few, if any, will undertake to deny. It is safe, however, to say that no other ecclesiastical system has developed at this point less friction as well as less of the spirit of selfishness. It is known that Soule did not desire the portfolio to which he was elected. Describing it as a semi-secular position, he had contended for the election of a layman. In the General Conference of 1808 he had moved to modify the section in the Discipline on "The Book Concern," and had advocated the policy of letting the whole work of the Church's publications out on contract, a plan which has received much consideration in modern Methodist assemblies.

At that date the publishing agency was verily no sinecure, nor a post to be coveted either for its distinc-

tion or its emoluments. The prestige of the office is a modern accretion. The incumbency of it then meant drudgery, harassing cares in carrying a budget behind which was no exchequer, and feeling one's way in the dark as to a policy. But being drafted by the suffrages of his brethren, Soule addressed himself to his difficult task with what success we shall see when our story reaches that particular stage in its telling.

The history of the publishing enterprises of American Methodism reads like a romance. The Methodist press has ever been a source of power next to the Methodist pulpit. It was so in England, but the fact has had emphasis in America. A Wesleyan minister visiting the American connections near the middle of the last century set forth his observations concerning the American Methodist press in these words: "Its radiations of light reach through thousands of miles to the remotest extremities of the Union; its voice of exhortation, of admonition, of reproof, of warning is heard in the wilderness, the village, the city of every part of the continent; its lifelike electrical fire is fusing itself into the masses of the population." And yet these vast concerns, carried on through the many publishing houses of the different branches of Methodism, had their origin in simple and economical devices.

Robert Williams, a local Wesleyan preacher, who came to America in 1769, only three years after Embury opened services in the old sail loft in New York, published the first books credited to the Methodists in the New World. The first American Conference, held in Philadelphia in 1773, ordered that no books should be published in the name of the Metho-

dists without official consent. From that date to 1789 not a few imprints, including editions of the Discipline, minutes, hymnals, and other official books, were ordered by the Conference. It was, however, not until the latter year that the yearly Conference determined to establish an official printing interest. This interest was known as "The Book Concern," a title which did not appear in the Conference minutes until the year 1792. To John Dickins, a native of England, the most literary man amongst the early preachers and otherwise capable, the work was committed. He was the stationed preacher in Philadelphia, a work heavy enough for one man. But he accepted the additional duties of Book Steward, and, willing soul that he was, served in that post also and without additional compensation. The "Book Rooms" were a chamber in his parsonage, which was itself "a hired house." He loaned the institution $600 of his private means, and that was the capital upon which it began its so great and destiny-making task. For ten years Dickins devoted himself to his duties and saw "one hundred and fourteen thousand volumes of books" go out from the presses which he hired to do his work. During his incumbency the Book Concern owned no presses and had no offices or storehouse, and he, with little assistance, did all the work of every character which the post demanded. A scourge of yellow fever visited Philadelphia in the late summer and autumn of 1799, and the faithful Dickins was claimed as one of its victims. Ezekiel Cooper succeeded and continued in office until 1808. The General Conference of 1804 removed the offices from Philadelphia to New York,

where one of the chief publishing plants of Methodism has since existed. The business greatly expanded under the agency of Cooper; and when he retired, in 1808, the capital invested was nearly fifty thousand dollars. Cooper was succeeded by John Wilson, who for the four previous years had been his assistant. Wilson, who had fine gifts and possessed a considerable degree of culture, died in 1810, and was succeeded by Daniel Hitt, a close friend and associate of Bishop Asbury's. He with Thomas Ware continued the work up to the General Conference of 1816, when, as already noted, Joshua Soule was called to take up the enterprise, which, though it had enjoyed no little prosperity, was now arrived at a stage where great skill and heroic faith must be used to bring it through depressing conditions. The Concern needed funds, its stock was old and all but valueless, a money crisis was on in the commercial world, and the paper of the Book Steward could not be discounted in New York. Again Soule showed himself the man of providence. He placed a large loan in a bank in Baltimore, two personal friends indorsing for him, and, opening up new books, he proceeded to rejuvenate the Concern. The era of modern Methodist printing and publishing begins with his administration. He carried the work up to 1820, and passed to the hands of Nathan Bangs the well-realized beginnings of that arm of Methodist service which, as we have seen, was one of its chief means of propagation during the nineteenth century.

Methodism early felt the need of a periodical publication. The uses of the modern Church newspaper were of course unknown in the early decades of the

nineteenth century, but the demand for a doctrinal forum was great. One of the earliest tasks of John Dickins was to reissue the *Arminian Methodist Magazine,* printed under the direction of the Wesleyan Conference in England. Two volumes—1789 and 1790—were issued when the enterprise failed for lack of support. Seven years later the *Methodist Magazine,* itself in part a reprint, was undertaken, but after the issuance of two volumes—1797 and 1798—it also was discontinued. The General Conference of 1812 ordered the publication of the suspended periodical to be resumed, but the finances of the Concern at that time did not admit of the necessary outlay, a condition which continued through the quadrennium. The order was therefore renewed in 1816, but it was January, 1818, before the initial number appeared. With the first issue of this magazine the history of our periodical literature properly begins.

The *Methodist Magazine* contained forty octavo pages, and such was the enthusiasm with which the sample edition was received that within a brief time the circulation had reached ten thousand copies. In beginning this enterprise Soule felt the embarrassment natural to one entering upon a new and difficult rôle. From the view-point of the present, it is all but impossible to understand the situation which confronted the editor. There were but few precedents for such a publication, and the ideals were uncertain and baffling. Dr. Bangs, the historian, says of this: "As the issuing of this work was entering on an untrodden path by those who were to guide its course and watch over its destinies, it is no wonder that its editor, Rev. Josh-

ua Soule, felt some anxiety for its success and a trembling sense of the responsibility he was about to assume." In his salutatory, or introduction, Soule said: "In publishing this periodical miscellany the editors feel all those sensibilities which arise from a conviction that its merits are to be tested under the inspection of an enlightened community. . . . The great design of this publication is to circulate religious knowledge, a design which embraces the highest interests of rational existence."

The drudgery of the publishing agency consumed his hours of daylight, so that he was reduced to the necessity of giving what time he could after the hour of 9 P.M. to editorial work, particularly that of preparing and selecting matter for the pages of the magazine. It was this necessity of turning the hours of night to redactorial account that led him to describe the contents of his journal as "the work of darkness." The literature embalmed in the dim pages of the few sets of the magazine now extant might not stand under the severest tests of criticism, but it voiced the serious and dignified thought, as also the evangelical spirit, of a people to whom was given a major amount of the responsibility in shaping the destinies of their times. But whatever the present might be disposed to say in praise or disparagement, it is of record that "contemporary authority spake in high terms of the editorial management of the magazine in its first years" (the years of Soule's editorship).

The first volume of the original print of the magazine with Editor Soule's introduction is before me. The general mechanical appearance is pleasing, and credit-

able to the printer, the arrangement and the character of the matter suggesting painstaking care and dignity of purpose in the editor. As would be naturally expected, the discussions are for the most part theologically and philosophically discursive. Snatches of biography and poetry enliven the pages. A good steel engraving of Bishop Asbury serves as frontispiece.

The American Bible Society, whose history and exploits in circulating the Holy Scriptures "without note or comment" have filled a century with glory, was organized in May, 1816. It was the chance and distinction of a lifetime to have had part in the work of setting that enterprise on its way. This chance and distinction fell to Joshua Soule, who, as the Publishing Agent of Methodism, became its representative in counseling the Society and assisting in the planning of its affairs. He saw it spring and grow and become a fruitful ministry in the whole earth. To his very latest years he was constantly cheered by the memory of that service which he, with others, had been permitted to render to his own century and, as he rightly esteemed it, to centuries beyond his own. Bishop McTyeire, who knew his thoughts in this as in other matters, says: "It was ever a satisfaction to him to reflect that his hand had been on the corner stone of that great Christian institution."

Only less important and noteworthy, because the application of the benefits of the organization have been only less general, was the part which he took in the organization of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The year 1819 is dis-

tinguished in Methodist annals as the year of the origination of this society. From the beginning of Methodism in England its spirit had been missionary, and the American societies had been very largely the product of that spirit. The plans and policies of Asbury were distinctly missionary, and the thought, if not the details, of a compact and well-financed scheme for foreign evangelism was in the mind of that resourceful man for a decade or more before his death. It was over his freshly-made grave that his long-cherished thought began to take shape and grow into effective plans. Dr. Bangs, in his "History of Methodism," says: "This subject became the topic of conversation among several individuals in the city of New York in the beginning of this year (1819), some for and some against the measure. At length, at a meeting of the preachers stationed in New York and the Book Agents, Rev. Laban Clark presented a resolution in favor of forming a Bible and Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. At this time the following preachers were present—namely, Freeborn Garrettson, Joshua Soule, Samuel Merwin, Nathan Bangs, Laban Clark, Thomas Mason, Seth Crowell, Samuel Howe, and Thomas Thorp. After a free interchange of thoughts on the subject, the resolution was adopted, and Freeborn Garrettson, Laban Clark, and Nathan Bangs were appointed a committee to prepare a constitution to be submitted at a subsequent meeting of the above-mentioned preachers. This committee on coming together agreed that each member should draft a constitution, and at a subsequent meeting the one should be adopted which might

appear the most suitable. On comparing these drafts, the one prepared by the present writer (Nathan Bangs) was preferred, and at a full meeting of the preachers before mentioned, after undergoing some verbal alterations, was unanimously concurred in and ordered to be submitted to a public meeting of the members and friends of the Church who might choose to attend the call in the Forsyth Street Church on the evening of April 5, 1819. This was accordingly done, when Nathan Bangs was called to the chair. Addresses were delivered by the Chair, by Freeborn Garrettson, Joshua Soule, and some others, when, on motion of Joshua Soule, seconded by Freeborn Garrettson, the constitution which had been prepared was adopted."

The organization of the society was then completed by the election of a complement of administrative officers, Bishop William McKendree being named President and Rev. Joshua Soule Treasurer.

From this time forward Soule gave close and constant attention, as he could command time from his other arduous duties, to the financial well-being of the missionary society, and was largely instrumental in bringing it forward for recognition in the General Conference of 1820.

The request made of the general body to adopt the purely local missionary society organized in New York City was cordially entertained and granted, though a similar request came from a society of the same character organized within the bounds of the Philadelphia Conference. But in adopting the constitution of the New York organization a significant

emendation of the name of the society was ordered to be made. The constitution of the society organized in 1819 carried in its first article this form of statement —namely, "This association shall be denominated the Missionary and Bible Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America." Under this name a general address was sent out to the people of Methodism and a special circular was addressed to the several Annual Conferences. But when the constitution came before the General Conference that body, on the recommendation of the society itself, struck out the word "Bible," because "The American Bible Society," which was now in successful operation, was fully adequate to the task of supplying the community with the sacred Scriptures. The words "in America" were also stricken out by order of the Conference, without request from the society, as it appears, leaving the title to read simply "The Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church." Dr. Bangs says that the reason for striking out the words "in America" was that they were "unnecessary to designate the character of the society, there being no other missionary society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in existence."

Were there no other history touching the words "in America" in the name of the Church, we could accept the conclusion of Dr. Bangs as final; but there are other and significant records to which we shall now call attention. To be both frank and explicit, it is my purpose to show that the original name of the Church, "The Methodist Episcopal Church in America," which was in constant official and current use from 1784 to 1796 and later, was by sundry official

acts of the General Conference changed to "Methodist Episcopal Church *in the United States of America*" as a legal form, the name "Methodist Episcopal Church" being used as a popular or current title. At first glance this discussion might appear to have been lugged by the ears into this biography, but into no work other than an open history of American Methodism could it be more properly brought than into a study of the life of Joshua Soule, the man who fought the cause of the constitution through many changes and vicissitudes, and who, by the token herein cited, had a predilection for the original name of the Church. But to our engagement.

When the Church was organized in 1784, the title received by common consent was "Methodist Episcopal Church in America." This common consent received no doubt a confirmation in competent Conference action, though the official Journal of the General Conference is no longer extant in any form. The data used by historians are the General Minutes of 1785 (republished in 1795) and copies of the Discipline as compiled at the Christmas Conference. The preamble printed in the Minutes of 1785, as reprinted in 1795, does not appear in the original pamphlet minutes. It was added by some later editor, and is therefore of no historical value in determining this point. In the original of the Minutes of 1785 Mr. Asbury introduced a brief note in which he says only that "it was agreed to form ourselves into an Episcopal Church, and to have superintendents, elders, and deacons." The state of the record as above described would leave us in much doubt, but concurrent docu-

ments carrying a parity of authority with the missing Journal make the point clear. In the episcopal letters issued by Bishop Coke to Francis Asbury, the original of which has been often authenticated, Dr. Coke styles himself "Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America." This document was written not more than three days after the action of the Conference by which the name and title of the Church was settled. Again the official books of the connection are in evidence. From 1784 to 1800 the Discipline and other publications of the Church bore on their title-pages the legend "in America." After that date the words "in America" disappeared from the title-pages of Methodist books and instead was printed simply "The Methodist Episcopal Church." A no less significant record was made in the General Minutes. From 1790 to 1799, inclusive, these Minutes contained annually the following question regularly answered—to wit: "*Question.* Who are elected by the unanimous suffrages of the General Conference to act as general superintendents of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America?"

At the session of the General Conference of 1796 a formal change of the title of the Church was effected by virtue of several actions then taken by the Conference. The first of these was an order creating "the Trustees of the Fund for the Relief and Support of the Itinerant, Superannuated, and Worn-Out Ministers and Preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America," etc. Dr. Bangs, in his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church" (Vol. II., page 45, edition of 1840), says that these

Trustees were, soon after their constitution by the General Conference, incorporated as a legal body under the laws of Pennsylvania. So far as we can learn, this is the first legal incorporation of any name or title used by the early American Methodists. The second action bearing on the matter of the Church name was that by which the Conference ordered inserted in the Book of Discipline a property title clause directing Church deeds to be made to "the Methodist Episcopal Church in *the United States* of America." This name persisted in the Book of Discipline of the undivided Methodist Church from 1796 to the separation of 1844, and still persists in the Book of Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church (North), the other separated part of original Methodism.

It is curiously as well as historically interesting to note how this change in the name of the Church is likely to have come about. When the Conference—that is, the progressive sitting of the itinerants—met in New York City in 1789, the Bishops, Coke and Asbury, called on General Washington, then officially in the city, and presented him with an address. In signing this address they styled themselves simply "the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church," as was generally done in current writing. General Washington in the paper of courtesy which he returned addressed the two general superintendents as "the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America." The national title was then one to conjure with. Civic pride was at high tide. Surely and rather quickly the symbol of the republic became a member of the phrase which made the Church's

name. It was distinctly limiting; but in that good time of national infancy no serious thought of what had really been done or what might eventually come of it obtruded upon the minds of the fathers. But it so happened that the original name was changed, and in the way described, which history gives meaning to the action of the General Conference of 1820 in eliding the words "in America" from the name of the Church's missionary society.

As the quadrennium of 1816-20 drew to a close a profound conviction settled upon Soule that he should not under any circumstances accept the post of Book Steward and Editor for another term. Bishop McTyeire reports him as saying long years afterwards that he would not again endure "the wear and tear, the drudgery and worry, the anxiety and responsibility of those four years in the Book Concern for all of 200 Mulberry Street." His election had been wholly unsolicited and undesired. He accepted the trust without consulting his own wishes or judgment. He was now determined to lay it down, consulting *only* his own wishes and judgment. He longed to be back in the pastorate, and it is almost certain that he entertained no expectation that the votes of his brethren would call him at the end of his term to the office of the episcopacy; least of all did he anticipate the extraordinary situation which would render it necessary for him to decline the preference of his brethren as expressed in their electoral vote.

Coming up to the General Conference, he found that his fellow-delegates had only words of approval for his administration of their publishing affairs and the

successful manner in which he had established and conducted the *Methodist Magazine.* To these words of approval they added the substantial testimonial of a thousand dollars voted from the surplus of the Book Concern to supplement his all too meager salary for the quadrennium. These tokens of appreciation must have made it only more difficult for him to take the strong stand against the majority action of the Conference which loyalty to the constitution and convictions of duty made necessary. But human conduct never carried a more certain manifest of sincerity and self-devotion than did his behavior throughout the course of affairs we are now to discuss.

CHAPTER IX.

An Effective Protest.

The various stages of American Methodist history have issued from dynamical conditions brought to the explosive point by the actions of the Church's law-making assembly. Perhaps this observation is axiomatic enough to be applied to the work of other large religious bodies and to that of State Legislatures, but the student will at once see its applicability to Methodism. Passing by the history of the American Methodist societies anterior to 1784, we may select certain sessions of the General Conference as special instruments of those epoch-making forces whose effects are traceable in both the spirit and structure of Methodism to-day.

The session of the General Conference which was convened in the city of Baltimore on May 1, 1820, was destined to be memorable amongst the always memorable sittings of that body. During ten or twelve days of its nearly four weeks of existence the thought and feeling of the body remained tense, and at times manifested considerable suppressed excitement under the weight of the old question as to whether the presiding elders should be appointed by the bishops or elected by the Annual Conferences. Bishop McTyeire, whom we have already had occasion to refer to as one who enjoyed exceptional opportunities of receiving from Bishop Soule views and impressions of those historic events in which the latter was a chief actor,

says that the excitement stirred by the discussion of this question "can now hardly be realized." With this inside view, obtained from so reliable a source, Bishop McTyeire felt justified in affirming that Soule's "unyielding advocacy of our executive system in 1820, and his firm stand then made, saved it; and in saving it, clearly and without compromise, the working energy and evangelism of the whole Church was maintained." The same writer, drawing his knowledge from the same confidential source, is able to inform us that Bishop Soule's "old and beloved colleague, Bishop Hedding, afterwards told him that he looked on his decisive action, especially in 1820, in that light." To properly appreciate the significance of this testimony it must be borne in mind that Bishop Hedding was a partisan against Soule in the memorable contest of this year, and was afterwards elected to the episcopacy largely by the votes of the advocates of an elective presiding eldership. Dr. John J. Tigert (afterwards bishop), in his "Constitutional History of Episcopal Methodism," affirms, and very safely, that "an orderly array of the facts in this case constitutes a sufficient vindication of Mr. Soule." In the valuable material which he brought together in the chapter of his history given to this General Conference he did much to make this orderly array possible. His concern, however, was to use this material in its single relation to the constitution, and not to assort and make it live as a part of the character and being of Joshua Soule.

I am made conscious here that, vital as is this history, as also that involved in the debates of 1844, no hand

before my own has undertaken the difficult task of molding into the aspects of personality and giving biographical shape to that part of it over which fell the shadow and into which entered the spirit and faith of the author of the constitution. This consciousness is of a sort to inspire satisfaction, but at the same time to beget feelings of diffidence and hesitation. A supreme duty of Methodism will remain unperformed until the story of this man has been fully, frankly, and sympathetically told.

The Committee on Episcopacy appointed by the General Conference of 1820 brought in its report on the twelfth day of the session. The report dwelt with tender and affectionate solicitude upon the too apparent fact of "the declining health and strength" of the Senior Superintendent, William McKendree, "worn down by long and extensive and faithful labors in the service of God and the Church." The report then turned to a consideration of the state of the episcopacy and closed with the recommendation "that it is expedient that one additional General Superintendent be elected and ordained during the session of this General Conference." On the thirteenth day of the session, near the beginning of the morning sitting, the Conference, acting on the recommendation of the committee, proceeded to an election. After the singing of several stanzas of a hymn and an invocation by Freeborn Garrettson, the ballot was taken. A total of eighty-eight votes was reported, of which Joshua Soule received forty-seven and Nathan Bangs thirty-eight. The remaining three were scattering. Joshua Soule having received a majority of the votes cast,

was declared to be duly elected to the office of a bishop, he being the seventh in the order of succession from Thomas Coke, the eighth from John Wesley.

The juncture of affairs at this stage of the Conference was happy and the outlook was promising, if not wholly reassuring. Soule was clearly the choice of the Conference for the episcopacy, and that on the high ground of merit. Party spirit had not nominated him, nor had divergence of sentiment controlled in his election. Although he had been previously unaware of the general preference of his brethren, nobody saw more clearly than the bishop elect the spontaneity of favor that had called him. He must therefore have looked forward with much satisfaction, if still with a burdening sense of responsibility, to years of labor and ministry as the servant of all his brethren. The ordination was appointed by the bishops to take place at 11 A.M. on Wednesday, May 24, being the eleventh day after the election. At least this is what the Journal would seem to indicate; but I am of the opinion that an earlier date was at first named, which was later changed, and only the latter date taken notice of in the Journal.*

*Since the above paragraph was written I have discovered indubitable evidence of the fact that an earlier date had been set for Soule's ordination. It is contained in an autograph letter of Bishop McKendree which has not before been published, and which I had the good fortune to turn up in the accumulation of documents and letters to which reference has already been made. This letter shows that Friday, the 19th day of May, was first fixed for the ordination. What could have been the motive or reason determining the

A few days previous to the episcopal election, though the Journal contains no note of the fact, Messrs. Merritt and Waugh revived in a motion submitted to the house the presiding elder question which had been voted down by so slender a majority in the General Conference of 1812, and which had also been rejected in the session of 1816. The Journal nowhere contains a statement of the form in which the Merritt and Waugh motion was put, but the information has been secured from an extraneous and reliable source. Bishop Paine, in his "Life and Times of Bishop McKendree," supplies the missing record, quoting it from an unpublished manuscript by Bishop Capers, who was himself a member of the General Conference of 1820 and an active participant in the debates on this motion.

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change? Could there have been expressed in it a wish to secure the passage of the resolutions before the ordination took place? The reader will have to decide the point for himself. The letter is as follows:

"To Bishops George and Roberts.—*Dear Brethren:* On Thursday afternoon I addressed a note to you that I had arrived in town for the purpose of attending the ordination on Friday at 11 o'clock, according to our previous mutual agreement. In the evening of the same day I was verbally informed that it was put off till the Sabbath. I have waited till this time and have received no further communication from you relative to the time. My health requires that I should retire into the country as soon as possible, and think I cannot tarry longer than Tuesday evening. I wish the ordination to take place in the Conference before I go out. You will therefore fix the time and give me information, and I will attend.

"Yours respectfully, W. McKENDREE.

"Monday morning, May 22, 1820."

This manuscript says: "Early in the second week of the General Conference of 1820 T. Merritt, of New England, seconded by B. Waugh, of Baltimore, moved so to amend the Discipline that the answer to the first question in Section 5 of Chapter I., 'By whom are the presiding elders to be chosen?' to read as follows: '*Answer.* By the Conferences.'"

At the time of the introduction of this motion it was read and sent to the table. The first notice that we have in the Journal of its presence on the calendar is an entry made on the sixteenth day, three days after Soule's election. This entry reads: "Moved and seconded to call up the resolution that had been laid on the table relating to the choice of presiding elders. Carried." This call was made near the hour of the noon adjournment, and after some parliamentary maneuvers, one of which was an attempt to secure an indefinite postponement, the way was cleared for the battle of arguments; but, adjournment being ordered, the question was left pending. The entire afternoon of Tuesday, May 16, was consumed in the debate, and on Wednesday, after the reports of committees had been heard, the motion came up as unfinished business. In the discussion Dr. William Capers and Samuel Dunwoddy took strong grounds against the measure, while A. Griffith and others supported the affirmative. Again the hour of adjournment left the question pending, and the contest was renewed at the afternoon sitting. Near the hour of afternoon adjournment it was moved and carried that "the present motion lie on the table until to-morrow morning."

The discussion promised to be an interminable one,

and party feeling had reached a high pitch. The onset had been Titanic from both sides, for both parties realized that the hour was crucial. Dr. Bangs, who, it will be remembered, strongly favored the proposed legislation, says in his history: "Perhaps a greater amount of talent was never brought to bear upon any question ever brought before the General Conference than was elicited from both sides of the house in the discussion of this resolution. Some of the speeches were deep, pungent, and highly argumentative, the speakers throwing their whole souls into the subject and winding themselves up to the highest pitch of impassioned eloquence, often concluding with a tremendous appeal to the understandings and consciences of their antagonists, both sides invoking the future prosperity of the Church as an auxiliary to their arguments." It began to be apparent to the leading advocates of the movement for an elective presiding eldership that the measure could never carry in the radical form in which it was pending. They also now realized that, if by any chance it should ever obtain the favor of a majority, the result of its application would be disturbing to the last degree. They therefore began to cast about for a form of resolution that could both command a majority vote and secure a more general unity of sentiment. Of the two Bishops, George and Roberts, elected in 1816, the former was known to be in favor of an elective presiding eldership. His sympathies had been steadily with the advocates of the measure, and he it was who now undertook to shape the course of compromise. When on the seventeenth day the motion was tabled "until to-morrow,"

as above related, it was that the mover of the postponement, Ezekiel Cooper, might bring forward a substitute that would, as he supposed, "be accommodating to both parties." Both Bishop Capers and Bishop Emory, who were on opposite sides in this discussion, agree in their later writings that it was generally understood that Bishop George was the author of this paper. As recorded in the Journal it reads: "Resolved, etc., that the bishop or the president of such Annual Conference shall ascertain the number of presiding elders wanted, and shall nominate three times the number, out of which nomination the Conference shall, without debate, elect by ballot the presiding elders." It will be seen that this was the old demand of 1812 and 1816 slightly modified; but being a modification and receding materially from the unvarnished radicalism of the Merritt-Waugh motion, it was believed that it would "accommodate." The situation which it created was both interesting and serious.

The substitute of Cooper was laid on the table along with the original motion. When the order arrived the next day, the original motion was again deferred to give time for the discussion of the substitute. Matters now took a new and sudden turn. The hand of Bishop George was again interposed, and, through Messrs. Capers and Emory, he secured the bringing in of a motion to the effect that six members of the Conference—three from either side of the controversy—be appointed to wait on the bishops and confer with them as to what alterations might be made to conciliate the wishes of the brethren on this subject. The committee, being appointed, was instructed to interview

the bishops and report to the Conference on the following day.

The bishops were met that afternoon, but no definite action was suggested to the committee as the result of the interview. Bishop McKendree expressed himself as flatly opposed to any change in the rule, but the other two bishops were favorable to some alteration. Another meeting was appointed for the following morning, but it did not take place. At noon, however, Bishop George consulted with the committee; and after some very searching questions asked by the negative side, it was agreed that the following resolutions should be reported to the Conference—viz.: "1. That whenever in any Annual Conference there shall be a vacancy or vacancies in the office of presiding elder in consequence of his period of service of four years having expired or the bishop wishing to remove any presiding elder, or by death, resignation, or otherwise, the bishop or president of the Conference having ascertained the number wanted from any of these causes, shall nominate three times the number, out of which the Conference shall elect by ballot, without debate, the number wanted; *provided,* when there is more than one wanted not more than three at a time shall be nominated, and not more than one at a time elected; *provided,* also, that in case of any vacancy or vacancies in the office of presiding elder in the interval of any Annual Conference, the bishop shall have the authority to fill the said vacancy or vacancies until the ensuing Annual Conference. 2. That the presiding elders be, and hereby are, made the ad-

visory council of the bishop or president of the Conference in stationing the preachers."

This resolution was written by Dr. Emory (afterwards bishop), but was signed by the entire committee, including Stephen G. Roszel, Joshua Wells, and William Capers, who had been strongly committed against an elective presiding eldership.

The principle of this resolution was not different (as Bishop George himself declared) from the old demands. It took the appointment of the presiding elders out of the hands of the bishops and put it in the hands of the Conferences, and that under a rule cumbersome, awkward, and calculated to breed "a sea of troubles" in the Annual Conferences. But the delegates had grown weary of strife and were filled with apprehensions, so much so that when the new resolution was put on its passage that afternoon it received sixty-one out of eighty-six votes, and was declared adopted. Thus was a contention, begun in 1792 by James O'Kelly and constantly renewed for twenty-eight years, but as constantly frowned upon, at last successful in commanding a majority vote of the General Conference. "Great joy was expressed at this union," writes a member of the Conference. "All now were in fellowship, if words could be taken as evidence." "It was hoped by many on both sides of the house," says Dr. Bangs, "that this long-agitated question would be permitted to rest in quiet." There was indeed quiet *for a time,* but it was a quiet that came of the misguided action of men who in a crucial struggle had sacrificed their convictions for a false peace, and who were now speechless.

A majority of the Conference was against the principle involved in the new rule; they were for the constitution unimpaired, but they had been harried into submission by the minority. A great and courageous leader had been needed. There was a man near by who might fully have supplied that lack, but he had been previously bound with the fetters of an episcopal election. Considerations of delicacy and propriety made it impossible for him to enter the lists of debate. His halfway station between the seat of a delegate and the episcopal chair put him where his advice could neither be sought nor given. He could only sit by as a listener and spectator. He had indeed silently protested with his vote as one of the twenty-five who went to record against the compromise resolution. He had waited. But the time had come when it was necessary that he should wait no longer. He was now to enter an effective protest—one consonant with the delicacy of his situation, one worthy of him, and of which the after age should hear.

At the critical moment Joshua Soule made a stand. "By the very nature and look and carriage of the man, he was one to make a stand." He was accustomed to meeting difficulties with frankness and courage. Every attitude which he assumed was sublime. He was as free from the mock heroic as he was from the rôle of the clown. "His courage was calm and great, his perceptions clear, his convictions firm, his survey of the situation thorough. He was not impatient. He had faith in truth and right, that in good time they would be vindicated." Having planted himself upon a conviction, he was immovable.

Immediately following the action of the Conference in adopting the "presiding elder" resolutions, Joshua Soule asked leave of absence from the Conference sitting. Without unnecessary delay, but "after a prayerful and mature consideration of the subject," he penned a letter to Bishops George and Roberts, excluding from the address the name of Bishop McKendree because of the absence of the Senior Superintendent from the city. This letter reads as follows:

Dear Bishops: In consequence of an act of the General Conference passed this day, in which I conceive the constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church is violated and that episcopal government which has heretofore distinguished her greatly enervated by a transfer of executive power from the episcopacy to the several Annual Conferences, it becomes my duty to notify you, from the imposition of whose hands only I can be qualified for the office of superintendent, that, under the existing state of things, I cannot, consistently with my convictions of propriety and obligation, enter upon the work of an itinerant general superintendent.

I was elected under the constitution and government of the Methodist Episcopal Church *unimpaired.* On no other consideration but that of their continuance would I have consented to be considered a candidate for a relation in which were incorporated such arduous labors and awful responsibilities.

I do not feel myself at liberty to wrest myself from your hands, as the act of the General Conference has placed me in them; but I solemnly declare, and could appeal to the Searcher of hearts for the sincerity of my intention, that I cannot act as superintendent under the rules this day made and established by the General Conference.

With this open and undisguised declaration before you, your wisdom will dictate the course proper to be pursued.

I ardently desire peace, and, if it will tend to promote it, am willing, perfectly willing that my name should rest in forgetfulness. J. SOULE.

This letter was written on Friday the 19th, but it was Monday the 22d before Bishop Roberts, with whom it had been lodged, could bring it to the attention of Bishop McKendree. Bishop Roberts "expressed the opinion that the bishop elect did not seem disposed to submit to the authority of the General Conference." Without time to carefully study the communication, Bishop McKendree doubted if such a sentiment were expressed in it. It is impossible, whatever method of interpretation be used upon the letter, to extract from it this meaning; but it is indicative of the prevalence of partisan feeling that a man so naturally conservative as Bishop Roberts should be able to so misread a brother's statement.

The Church was most fortunate in having had a careful record of this particular part of the transaction preserved by Bishop McKendree in his Journal. It was agreed, he says, between him and Bishop Roberts that the latter should see Mr. Soule and report at a meeting of the bishops the next morning. It was also agreed that should Mr. Soule express any purpose to ignore an act of the General Conference, his ordination could not be proceeded with. Bishop George visited him according to agreement, and the result, as stated in the language of Bishop McKendree, was that "Soule disavowed the sentiment which the letter was supposed to contain, and stated his views on the back of the letter in terms too plain to be misunderstood."*

*At the special request of Bishop McKendree, I hereby certify that in the above statement I mean no more than that I cannot, consistently with my views of propriety and respon-

The bishops met the next morning according to appointment. When they had carefully read the two letters of the bishop elect, it was clear that he had done two things: (1) he had fully cleared himself of contumacious sentiment; (2) but he put the bishops themselves to test on the constitutionality of the "presiding eldership" question. Bishop McKendree considered it unconstitutional. With the eye-opening letter of Soule before him, Bishop Roberts expressed the belief that the measure was "an infringement of the constitution." "Bishop George chose to be silent." The question now was: Should they proceed, under the existing circumstances, with the ordination of the bishop elect? It was unanimously agreed that he should be ordained, and to Bishop George was assigned the task of preparing the credentials and the preaching of the ordination sermon.

Thus the bishops saw their way, but felt that a communication was due the Conference. The bishop elect also approved this course, and Bishop McKendree was charged with the important task.

The Conference being assembled, the venerable senior bishop appeared before it, and, reading the letter of the bishop elect, informed the body of the decision of the bishops to proceed with the ordination, and also gave "an intimation of their opinion respecting the constitutional difficulty." This "intimation" was in the form of a rather lengthy review of the situation,

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sibility, administer that part of the government particularly embraced in the act of the General Conference above mentioned. JOSHUA SOULE.

in which McKendree expressed in vigorous terms his personal judgment of the resolution as "leaving the bishops divested of their power to oversee the business of the Church under the full responsibility of General Superintendents." Continuing, he said: "I extremely regret that you have, by this measure, reduced me to the painful necessity of pronouncing the resolution *unconstitutional, and therefore destitute of the proper authority of the Church.* . . . Under the influence of this sentiment, and considering the importance of the subject, I enter this *protest.*"

Nor did the venerable man stop at this. Reasoning that if the constitution may be violated in one particular it may be so violated in any, in all, he then adds: "Believing as I do that this resolution is unauthorized by the constitution, and therefore not to be regarded as a rule of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I consider myself under no obligation to enforce it or enjoin it on others to do so." That a profound impression was created upon the Conference by the reading of the letter of Mr. Soule and the protest of Bishop McKendree may well be imagined. Dr. Bangs says the situation "led to a serious suspense in respect to the expediency of the measure." Such was the respect for the character and judgment of Bishop McKendree, as also for Mr. Soule, that immediately a purpose to rescind the offensive resolutions began to take shape. The extreme advocates of the new rule, however, took great umbrage at the course of the senior bishop and the bishop elect.

As already noted, the ordination was appointed for the hour of 11 A.M. Wednesday, May 24. The pre-

sentation of Bishop McKendree's protest and the reading of Mr. Soule's letter occurred near the middle of the morning session on Tuesday, May 23. During the noon recess "those in favor of a change held a caucus without consulting those not in favor of a change, and agreed to arrest the ordination of Joshua Soule." This statement, made by Bishop Capers, explains a motion offered in the afternoon session of the same day by D. Ostrander and J. Smith, as follows:

> Whereas Brother Joshua Soule, bishop elect, has signified in his letter to the episcopacy, which letter was read in open Conference, that if he be ordained bishop he will not hold himself bound by a certain resolution of the General Conference relative to the nomination and election of presiding elders; wherefore,
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> *Resolved,* That the bishops be earnestly requested by this Conference to defer or postpone the ordination of the said Joshua Soule until he gives satisfactory explanations to this Conference.

The candid student can but be surprised at the language of this resolution, in view of Mr. Soule's frank and unequivocal statements; but the excitement of the moment had attributed to the bishop elect the language of protest employed by Bishop McKendree. It was not only the privilege but the duty of Bishop McKendree to speak in protest against any unconstitutional act of the majority; while the situation of Mr. Soule was one which demanded reserve and sacrifice. It began to be clear to him that with the new rule in force he could never accept ordination to the episcopacy. Had he been already ordained, his position would no doubt have been that of Mr. McKendree,

and his language could not have been lacking in frankness. As he now stood he could not act as defender of the constitution, but only as a sacrifice upon its altar.*

A debate sprinkled, as it would appear, with acridity and criticism, followed the introduction of the Ostrander resolution proposing to arrest the ordination. Upon this Mr. Soule asked the privilege of making a statement. That his remarks had the effect of clearing him wholly from the imputation contained in the

*From the fragment of a manuscript unquestionably in Bishop McKendree's handwriting I make these extracts: "At an advanced stage of the debate the Conference appointed a committee composed of leading characters on both sides of the question to consult the bishops on the subject. The senior bishop, in consequence of great debility, was much confined to his room. Therefore the other bishops and the committee waited on him and obtained his opinion unfavorable to the proposition before the Conference. The bishop who had put off the ordination of the bishop elect, without direction from the Conference or consulting his colleagues, invited the committee to meet him. They did so; and there, by his influence, as I understood, the motion which had been under discussion was remodeled and a compromise agreed to, etc. . . . The senior bishop submitted the propriety of developing our situation and the state of things to Conference. It was judged proper to do so, and he was requested to make the communication. . . . The Conference after receiving the information became much agitated. Various attempts were made to criminate the bishop elect, but none could be made to hold. He had only stated his views to the bishops. . . . They had resolved to receive and ordain him. I heard no objection to the bishops' resolution to ordain the bishop elect. . . . Be this as it may, *Soule suffered.*"

resolution is evident, for immediately a motion to postpone indefinitely was offered; but before the question could be put the mover withdrew it unconditionally. Nor was this all. Before its next breath was drawn the Conference heard a motion to reconsider the "presiding elder question," so as to open the main question to a new vote. Those who were opposed to the election of presiding elders, but who for the sake of peace had gone into a compromise movement, now felt released from the compact by the action of the other side in going into a secret caucus. But though this party was strong, it was unable to force a vote on the proposition to reconsider, nor was the other side able to secure a postponement. The debate was waged through Wednesday morning, and now the hour set for the ordination was approaching. Attention was called to this fact. A situation existed the way out of which the most astute parliamentarian in the house could not see. "At this critical juncture the manly dignity of Mr. Soule again came to the rescue." "At five minutes before eleven o'clock," as we are informed by the Journal, "he arose and expressed the wish that the General Conference should by vote request the episcopacy to delay his ordination for some time." This proper and courteous request was not formally granted, but the debate went on until within a few minutes of the noon hour, when it was discovered that the house was without a quorum. For the episcopacy Bishop George announced that the ordination had been postponed, and the Conference adjourned until the afternoon.

At the afternoon session the vote was taken on the

motion to reconsider the presiding elder question, and resulted in a tie. The ballot was repeated with a similar result. The motion was therefore lost, and the situation was tenser than before. But, as the Journal records, Bishop George announced that the ordination of Mr. Soule would take place at twelve o'clock in the Conference room. To accept ordination to the episcopacy under these conditions was impossible to Joshua Soule, and he accordingly and without delay submitted to the Conference "a communication in which he stated his resignation of the office of a bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church to which he had been elected." This communication was, on motion, left on the table. The ordination ceremonies were, of course, again off, and the Conference took up the calendar.

The Conference not showing a disposition to call up his letter of resignation, Mr. Soule at the afternoon session asked that it be acted upon. A motion requesting him to withdraw his letter of resignation was offered, but was itself withdrawn. The courageous stand of the bishop elect further impressed the body, friends and opponents. The delegates desired time to study the new development. In the meantime, to make his position still clearer to the bishops, whose setting of a second hour for his ordination came as a surprise to him, Mr. Soule addressed to the episcopacy the following letter:

BISHOPS MCKENDREE, GEORGE, AND ROBERTS.

Dear Bishops: The course which I have pursued in presenting my resignation to the Conference may savor of disrespect to you, and therefore needs apology. I spent the night in a

sleepless manner, and could not prepare the communications which I designed to make to you and to the Conference in time to see you until after Conference hours. Not having the least intimation or idea of the appointment for ordination this morning, my intention was to have seen you together immediately after the morning session and to communicate to you first my resignation, and to the Conference at the opening of the afternoon session. But on coming to the Conference I learned that the ordination was notified for this morning; and in order to prevent improper excitement as to the time appointed for ordination, I presented my resignation to the Conference when I did. I hope you will not pass a severe censure on me until you shall hear the reasons which have led to this measure.

Yours most respectfully, JOSHUA SOULE.

May 25, 1820.

The tide in the great constitutional contest had now reached its height, and during the adjournment overnight perceptibly turned. The ultimate decisive change was expressed in a motion submitted at the morning session of the next day, as follows: "Moved that the rule passed at this Conference respecting the nomination and election of presiding elders be suspended until the next General Conference, and that the Superintendents be and they are hereby directed to act under the old rule respecting the appointment of presiding elders." The remainder of the morning after the appearance of this motion was consumed in parliamentary maneuvers. Indefinite postponement was asked for but denied. The point of order was then raised on the motion, but was promptly ruled against by the President, Bishop Roberts. An appeal was taken to the house, but the Chair was sustained. The hour of adjournment arriving, the business went over.

In the afternoon session a spirited debate ensued, in which Nathan Bangs and Elijah Hedding took the leading parts. Another unsuccessful attempt was made to indefinitely postpone the motion to postpone the presiding eldership rule. The motion on the rule was, however, laid temporarily on the table, that the Conference might take up and consider Mr. Soule's letter of declination. Again the bishop elect was urged to withdraw his letter. This he firmly declined to do, and it will be easily seen that this final decision was logical and of a piece with the whole course of his action. The rule was still in force, the effort to suspend it having been up to this stage unsuccessful. It is even a question if he would have accepted ordination under the suspension of the resolution.

The Journal of the General Conference contains a simple statement to the effect that Mr. Soule's declination was accepted, but there is no evidence that such a motion was ever put to the Conference. It was a release by consent. The firm and persevering course of the chief person of this long-drawn drama hastened the falling of the curtain. Almost immediately thereafter the main question—the proposition to suspend for four years the newly enacted rule on the presiding eldership—was put to the house and carried by a substantial majority, forty-five voting for the suspension and thirty-four voting against it. From this time forward the abortive rule was destined to be known as the "suspended resolutions." They had a long history, being carried by Bishop McKendree around the connection during the succeeding quadrennium for the judgment of the Annual Con-

ferences on their constitutionality and expediency. We shall meet them again in the course of this narrative.

On the day following the suspension of the presiding elder resolutions a movement was started looking to another episcopal election, but it soon became evident that no other result than the reëlection of Soule could be obtained. This result his opponents did not desire, and for his own part he laid upon his friends the duty of preventing it. The bishops, after consulting together, reported to the Conference that they would be able without reënforcement to superintend the work of the connection for another quadrennium, and thus the long chapter ended, so far as it concerned the General Conference of 1820.

That which remains to Methodism of this presiding eldership contest beyond a mere historic interest is that its records serve as criteria by which to test the content of the constitution at this point—the right of the bishops to appoint the preachers to their stations, including every form of official service to which they may be called. This is a right in the last analysis, for from McKendree down the bishops have been accustomed to use the knowledge and discretion of the presiding elders as their own, employing their exclusive right to make appointments only where they have ample or superior knowledge, or where an act of *primacy in parity* becomes necessary. Autocracy is impossible where this principle (which is the true constitutional one at this point) is observed. That it has sometimes been disregarded is not to be disputed, but the cases in which a bishop has thus been "in

contempt of his cabinet," to use an episcopal phrase, are the exceptions to a rule which has obtained in Episcopal Methodism for well-nigh a hundred years.

It is not likely that this question will ever again seriously recur in parliamentary shape, but if it should there will be no difficulty in remembering the demand of Bishop McKendree when he took his appeal to the Annual Conferences: Let a decision come in a constitutional way from the Annual Conferences; let them take the responsibility of declaring constitutional that which so plainly runs contrary to a restrictive rule, or else let them open the way for it to be settled in the constitution amongst the fundamentals. The demand, in other words, was: Change the constitution, and do it in the constitutional way. Had the course of the advocates of the new rule been directed toward securing their cause in the terms of a constitutional amendment, the mouth of Soule had been closed, and his declination of the honors proffered him in 1820 would never have been heard of. The constitution can amend itself, but those who live under it can do nothing contrary to it. The constitutional path lay open to the electionists in 1820. But the constitution (there was the rub!) was a wall too high to be scaled.

CHAPTER X.

DOUBLY CALLED.

WITH the close of the exciting scenes of the General Conference of 1820, Soule returned to his home in New York City, where he had greatly commended himself to the local laity, and where as a preacher he was in general demand. He was already a member of the New York Conference, and had served in the last General Conference as a delegate from that body. The rule now in force respecting the Conference relations of connectional officers had not then been established. When elected General Book Steward, therefore, his transfer from New England to New York became a matter of course. This circumstance proved eminently satisfactory in the end, both to him and to the local Church which desired his services. The New York Conference met on June 1, five days after the adjournment of the General Conference, and so without loss of time he stepped again into the pastorate.

The almost daily experience of this already much-suffering man during the quadrennium between 1820 and 1824 was connected with what we shall now uniformly know as the "suspended resolutions." He had wished to retire to a pastorate and the quiet life of his own family circle, and there live disentangled from the discussions and involvements which he foresaw must follow the effort to dispose of these resolutions. In a letter written to a friend—a friend not identified,

but a leader, as it would appear, in one of the stronger Conferences—shortly after his return to New York City this wish is ardently expressed. The letter, which, so far as I can ascertain, has never been published, is now dim and hangs together in shreds and fragments, but the chirography is unmistakable. From such parts of it as can be read I make these extracts:

Hitherto the merits of this question have been tested only at the tribunal of the General Conference and almost exclusively with reference to the ministry. It may be justly doubted whether those who have advocated a change have any proper assurance that the membership of the Church would approve of such a change. That the question is of vital importance to the whole body I need not attempt to prove. . . .

My habits of thinking had associated with the episcopacy the prosperity of the work of God in general and the dearest interests of the Church, and with the character of the bishops I had identified that of the whole body. . . .

My principles of action were fixed; there was no reserve when I decided. Hope, which had so long hovered round the shades of solitude, gave up the delightful scenes, and every anticipation of enjoyment in my long-desired retreat met at once a hopeless grave. I had cast my eyes over a rising family, to which my affection was strongly attached, and had virtually submitted them to the disposal of providence and the care and protection of the Church. I had taken into account the arduous work which lay before me—the privations and sufferings inseparable from the office. . . .

It verily appeared to me that jealousy, suspicion, and contention would be the legitimate posterity of those resolutions. Every view of the subject rendered my own situation more and more critical. How to sustain the character of Christian humility and manifest a suitable deference to the judgment of so large a majority of the General Conference, some members of which were ministers of the gospel when I was in

or near the cradle, and at the same time to appear in the light of that noble independence which I have ever valued as one of the brightest ornaments of the human mind was a matter of no ordinary difficulty. . . .

It was well understood, as far as I was known, that I was decidedly in favor of the old plan and wished to preserve the executive authority in the hands of the general superintendents, where the General Conference and the constitution had deposited it. I had defended it publicly and privately. . . . There was nothing equivocal, nothing concealed. Under these circumstances my election obtained. No attempt was made to alter the government, nor any intimation given of an attempt to do so, so far as I know, until after the election. . . . A course of silence and submission on my part would have demonstrated that I was unworthy the confidence which had been reposed in me. It might have been said with just inference, and in direct reference to me, that "the honor of a miter will damp the zeal of sentiment."

Some observations may be made on this letter. For the first part, it shows that Soule had great respect for the laity of the Church, and early deferred to the voice of the Church's general membership. He was a strong constitutionalist, but he recognized that the constitution was a guarantee to the laymen as well as to the clergy. He logically concluded that the laity would prefer the old rule to the new. Again, this letter shows that he had carefully counted the cost of being a Methodist bishop. He had in anticipation of service in the office put comfort, ease, family, and life on the altar of acceptance. He had determined to be that servant of all whom his Master had called.

He showed that he had a lofty ideal of the episcopacy—its work, its singleness of purpose, and its

identification with the character and work of the Church. He at last makes it clear that he had weighed duty and ambition together and had chosen duty—duty from which even the enticements of a miter could not swerve him.

Bishop McKendree, it will be remembered, determined to appeal to the Annual Conferences to pass on the suspended resolutions before another General Conference should sit. This, as it proved, was a wise and statesmanlike course. For it he had a conspicuous precedent. In 1809 he and Bishop Asbury, as general superintendents, formed the Genesee Conference. Against this act there was an outcry, it being freely charged that there was no authority therefor. As an answer to this charge the bishops immediately laid the matter before the Annual Conferences, and the challenged act of episcopal administration was approved. With this record of instruction from the body of the preachers, the General Conference accepted the Genesee Conference as having been legally organized, though it thereupon declared that the authority to organize new Conferences should thereafter rest only with the legislative body.

In his plan for dealing with the suspended resolutions the senior bishop was not seconded by a large party. The extreme electionists were unfriendly to the idea, being unwilling to even raise the question of legality. The friends of the old rule looked generally with disfavor upon it, because they hoped to see the objectionable novelty circumvented without exposing the constitution to the invasion of a weakening element. Joshua Soule, who was closer to McKendree

than any other living man, was doubtful of the wisdom of the appeal. His deathless devotion to the constitution made it difficult for him to consider the possibility, after so much sacrifice, of opening a way into the fundamental law of the Church for the disruptive measure.

In a letter dated February 27, 1821, Bishop McKendree fully disclosed to Soule his plan of procedure. "The course I took at the last General Conference," he wrote, "respecting the suspended resolutions —to lay the subject before the Annual Conferences— must be carried out. . . . I expect to begin at the next Ohio Conference and so go through the Conferences. I design to lay the subject so before them as to set them completely at liberty, so far as respects me, as to authorize the adoption, and thus put an end to strife, *if this will do it*, and thereby give additional strength to the constitution, which will guard us against infringements for the future. . . . I desire, dear brother, to hear from you. Please write fully and sentimentally."

To this affectionate and confidential request Mr. Soule wrote at considerable length and in a thoroughly characteristic style. This letter must stand not only as a dignified utterance between two great souls in absolute and affectionate confidence, but as one of the masterly state papers of Methodism. Dr. Tigert printed liberal extracts from this document in his "History of Constitutional Methodism." As the original is before me and should be preserved, I give it entire so far as it relates to the subject in hand. It is as follows:

Dear Bishop: I have received three letters from you since I wrote, which certainly requires apology on my part. When I was in Baltimore I should have answered your first, but knew not where to direct; and then you suggested a doubt as to whether you should reach Baltimore. Your second, which I received about a week ago, gave me directions relative to your intended course and where I might meet you. I was investigating the weighty subjects of your letters preparatory to an answer when your third came to hand yesterday by Brother Ryland. I am too deeply employed at this moment in the important business of our missionary society, preparatory to the anniversary which meets to-morrow evening, to enter at any considerable length into the interesting subject proposed in your communications.

On proposing and recommending to the Annual Conferences the adoption of the suspended resolutions of the General Conference I have my doubts and fears. I am decidedly of your opinion, that, although the resolutions are no improvement of our system, but rather tend to enfeeble its energies, yet, if no further encroachments are made upon the executive authority, the government may be administered under the provisions of those resolutions. And if I had any sufficient security that the adoption of those resolutions in constitutional order would be the means of reconciliation and lay the foundation for a permanent peace, I would cordially recommend them for such adoption. But it is impossible for me to conceive that those brethren who for so many years have contested the radical principles of the government will rest satisfied while the essential features of episcopacy remain. And I am fully pursuaded that one change will be urged as a ground, plead as a precedent, and used as an auxiliary to promote another. If the course which you propose is pursued, it follows that each Conference must act, in recommending the adoption of the resolutions, upon the ground that they are unconstitutional. I think it is a fair presumption that some of the Conferences will not act on this ground. But my principal fears are the effect which the measure may have on the membership. The measures of the last General

Conference have given many of our people great alarm. From the time the constitution was formed, in which the character of the government was fixed and the rights of the members, private and official, secured, all seem to have settled down in peace and quietude and confidence. It seemed like the return of a calm after a storm, and general joy prevailed under the conviction that we had arrived to that permanent state of things in which all might rest. No alteration of the government was expected or desired, nor did an apprehension prevail that any new burdens would be imposed or terms of communion established. Under these assurances, what must have been the surprise when the proceedings of the General Conference were made public? A transfer of important and long-established prerogatives from one official department to another, and even doubts suggested as to the validity of the constitution itself! From this view of the subject I am fully convinced that the resolutions can never go into operation with safety to the peace of the Church on any other ground but that which you propose; and, all things considered, I am inclined to think that your course is the best and safest which can be pursued. If I do not see you in New York, I will avail myself of the earliest opportunity after our Conference to communicate more fully on the subject.

In a later section of this chapter I shall take note of the results obtained by the venerable senior bishop in his Annual Conference referendum on the "suspended resolutions."

At the moment when Bishop McKendree, with his own and Bishop Elect Soule's letters in his hand, came before the General Conference of 1820 to *protest* against the threatened unconstitutional action of the electionists, he started an issue which, after decades of discussion and waiting, crystallized into the *veto* provision as it now exists in the constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. A reference to the evo-

lutional course of this veto proviso is pertinent to this story, because Bishop Soule sustained to it not only the relation of expressed sympathy, but gave to the discussion of its merits and claims some of his best thought and most industrious efforts. The General Conference, as a result of Bishop McKendree's protest and Mr. Soule's declination of episcopal ordination, recommended to the Annual Conferences to authorize a constitutional measure whereby the bishops could veto any act of the General Conference which they believed to be an infringement of the constitution; nevertheless, the General Conference was to be permitted to override this veto if it could muster a two-thirds vote in rejoinder. The Conferences failed to authorize this provision. But largely through the efforts of Soule and McKendree a similar measure was, in 1824, proposed to the Annual Conferences for ratification. Only in this case it was provided that, if the General Conference persisted in the face of an episcopal veto, the measure was to go to the Annual Conferences for final determination. Thus were the Conferences and the episcopacy to share the veto power. The principle involved in this was plain—namely, *the General Conference cannot be the judge of the constitutionality of its own acts.* This was the doctrine of McKendree and Soule. In this last shape the measure went to the Annual Conferences between 1824 and 1828, failing of ratification. But in the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which met in 1870 the principle was again initiated, was subsequently ratified, and is now, as before indicated, imbedded in the constitution.

Could Bishop Soule have lived but four years longer, he should have seen one of his early ideals realized amongst the institutions of Methodism in the beloved land of his adoption.

To those who are proved great and generous fall multiplied responsibilities, and to those who shun a grace in bearing burdens shall burdens be added. During the two years of Joshua Soule's pastorate in New York City a variety of harassing but not unexpected disturbances arose in the Churches contained in the station or city circuit. The first in order of these was probably the agitation which was begun amongst the colored members for an independent organization. As these people were weak and their church buildings greatly embarrassed with debt, Soule strove earnestly to reconcile them to remaining with their white brethren. His efforts possibly delayed the movement of separation, but in the latter part of 1820 the Zion Colored Church declared its independence. In this course it was soon followed by the other congregations of colored people in New York and Brooklyn, and in 1821, at a conference held in New York City, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was formed.

But there was made another and more serious breach in the membership by revolutionary white leaders. Rev. James M. Stillwell, one of the preachers of the district, stationed for the year at a suburban post known as Zion and Asbury, led a secession of three hundred dissident members into an independent organization. Writing in September of the year (1820) to Bishop McKendree concerning this schism.

Soule says: "You will doubtless see Bishop George in Baltimore or its vicinity and receive from him a narrative of the disastrous events which have transpired in this station. Suffice it to say that several hundred have separated themselves from the fellowship of our Church, established an independent congregation, embodied under a system of government which secures a perfect equality of right and power to every member, male and female—properly speaking, an ecclesiastical democracy in the most extensive sense of the word."

True to his student and publicist habits, Soule in this letter enters into an analysis of the causes of these disturbances, which causes in their incipiency went back several years. He had observed to Bishop McKendree at the time of his first settlement in New York as Book Steward "that serious and very unpleasant results await us in this city." He heard irresponsible mutterings against Church administrations. From discontented preachers the spirit of disloyalty had sifted into the thoughts of the laity, large numbers of whom had rebelled against almost every form of discipline. As a consequence, the prosperity of the societies had been threatened. Thus matters stood when reports came from Baltimore touching the debates on the presiding eldership and the action suspending the resolutions. There was more or less strife and contention everywhere. It separated friends and estranged brethren who had before lived in close confidence. It burst like a storm over the head of the venerable senior bishop; even he could not be spared. The Methodism of the metropolis became the low-

pressure center of the ecclesiastical barometer. Although Soule was so cordially welcomed, the disaffected partisans in the local societies took advantage of a prejudice against him to foment and effect disunion.

In response to a call from Soule, Bishop McKendree in 1821 made a visit to New York, and the two together succeeded in largely allaying the feverish discontent which had been engendered by the aftermath of General Conference debates. It is likely that after the painful blood-letting which the New York societies involuntarily submitted to, they enjoyed a surer prosperity and that a more certain peace settled upon them. This is borne out by a statement found in Dr. Bangs's "History," in which he says: "There was also a good work (in 1822) in the city of New York, about three hundred being added to the Church. This was encouraging to those who had mourned over the departure of so many two years before." The revival which brought this large and fresh ingathering occurred near the close of Soule's second year in the city. That year he had for one of his colleagues in the station the seraphic John Summerfield, a native of England, whose fame for eloquence and power in preaching was soon to spread almost as widely as had that of Whitefield, but which was not to endure so long. His brilliant career ended in death in 1825.

Ecclesiastical "giraffing" was unknown to the Methodism of the early decades of the nineteenth century. There was too nearly a parity of station to permit of self- or place-seeking on a large scale. In those days it was the transfer who was commiserated. Now it

is too often the case that success is measured by the ability to become a "shooting star." Unsolicited necessity made Joshua Soule a transfer in 1816. In 1822 the same necessity came upon him—he was episcopally ordered to Baltimore. Of this he informed Bishop McKenlree in a letter written some time in the spring of that year. "You were apprised," he writes, "that I had received instructions from Bishop George to remove to the Baltimore Conference at its next session. No appointment could please me better, and such removal I contemplate with the highest satisfaction. But if I have not communicated the same in substance before, I desire that it may be explicitly understood by you and Bishop George that I make no claim by virtue of those instructions, and hold myself in constant readiness to serve in any section of the work which may be considered most conducive to the general good. I say this that both yourself and Bishop George may feel at perfect liberty with respect to my future sphere of labor, any previous instructions to the contrary notwithstanling."

It is not difficult to understand that the man who could thus absolutely submit himself "as a son in the gospel" to authority and direction could in the same spirit of loyalty put aside "the honor of a miter." What is more, the final defeat of a man of that stamp and spirit is to be written amongst the things that heaven has made impossible.

In the Baltimore Conference Soule assumed an attitude of great caution, and all but declined to discuss current issues in the Church. Devoting himself to his pastoral duties, he left outside matters to take

their course. The leader to whom it is given to determine the destinies of men is not a gossip nor a brawler. He speaks, on occasion, fitting words for strength, conviction, and seasonableness, and is then silent until occasion again makes utterance imperative. During the year 1823 a rumor gained currency that, on account of the tension produced by the pendency of the "suspended resolutions," a split in the Church was imminent. Bishop George shared the fear expressed by many. Henry Smith, a member of the Baltimore Conference, a man of strength and prudence, and in the previous year traveling companion to Bishop McKendree, undertook at this time to secure expressions of opinion and judgment from the leading preachers of his Conference. He of course addressed his inquiry to Mr. Soule, but in his reply, as Smith reports, "he was cautious, for the time had nearly come when it might be said: 'Trust ye not in any brother in Church government.'"

But Soule was not to be left to the enjoyment and protection of his self-imposed silence. Near the close of his second year of service in the Baltimore Conference a paper was put in circulation addressed to the members of that body, and dealing with the stalking pestilence of the "suspended resolutions." The author of this address was John Emory, the framer of the "suspended resolutions" in the shape in which they had finally been passed by the General Conference. In addition to the name of Emory, the names of Albert Griffith, Gerrard Morgan, and Beverly Waugh were attached to this address. When the document came into the hands of Soule, he saw at once that it was

meant to bring into question his own motives and acts in connection with the incidents of 1820. I have been unable to find a copy of this address or even to secure enough information concerning it to make a summary of its charges or implications. Dr. Armstrong, in his "History of the Baltimore Conference," does not even refer to it; but Dr. (now Bishop) Denny, a former member of that Conference and thoroughly familiar with its history, has collated all the facts. From a most instructive and eloquent sketch of the life of Bishop Soule from his pen in the July, 1907, number of the *Methodist Review* I quote in continuing the history of this incident:

The Baltimore Conference met in Winchester, Va., April 8, 1824, Bishop George presiding. There were eighty-two preachers present, an unusually large number for that time. On the first day, under the then twelfth question, "Are all the preachers blameless in life and conversation?" the name of Soule was called. Some one answered: "Nothing against him." Instantly Soule was on his feet, and, holding up the pamphlet signed by Griffith, Morgan, Waugh, and Emory, said: "Yes, there is." He would not allow his character to pass till the issue raised in that address was settled. He, in fact, arrested his own character. He declined to allow it to pass till the writer of the pamphlet was present. The Minutes show that "when the name of Joshua Soule was called, at his own request his case was laid over." On the following Thursday it was taken up, "having been laid over until the arrival of J. Emory." On Friday his case was resumed, and Soule stated that "he considered his character had been implicated by various publications, especially by a publication signed by several members of this Conference." He addressed the Conference at considerable length, and was followed by Emory in reply. Soule's character was then passed. From another source it is learned that Soule's

speech on this occasion was thrilling, and "so triumphant that the parties retracted their accusation and confessed that they had done him an injury."

Rev. Henry Smith, from whom I have already quoted, and who is very freely drawn upon by Dr. Armstrong in his "History of the Baltimore Conference," gives an interesting account of an attempt on the part of the constitutionalists to take snap judgment on their antagonists in the election of General Conference delegates. When Smith informed Soule of this plan, he expressed strong disapproval of it. He thought, however, that a meeting might be held for exchange of views and fixing upon men to represent them in General Conference. He nevertheless felt that it would be "love's labor lost." To him the outlook was distinctly discouraging. But despite the disfavor with which Soule regarded the proposed meeting, it (or one of similar character) was held. The other side also met with the same intent and purpose. The result of the elections in the Conference was that "only old side men of the right stamp" were selected. The name of Joshua Soule appears fourth in the list of thirteen principal delegates. Not one of the signers of the anti-Soule pamphlet was elected, though at least three of them were amongst the leading members of the Conference, and two of them afterwards became bishops. The result of the ballot caused great rejoicing with the majority, but was a bitter mortification to the electionists.

The Baltimore Conference at this session entertained a distinguished guest, Rev. Richard Reece, the first regularly appointed fraternal delegate from the

British to the American Conference. He had arrived in this country some days before, and had accepted an invitation to visit this sitting of the oldest of the American yearly Conferences. He listened, as Smith informs us, to a debate in the Conference between Soule and Emory in which the polemical combatants "put forth all their strength."

The General Conference of 1824 was now but a fortnight away, and it had already been ascertained that a majority of the delegates chosen were opposed to the contemplated alterations in the government. And what had been the result of Bishop McKendree's appeal to the Annual Conferences? This appeal or address, which has been characterized as "one of the most important documents of our constitutional history," concludes, in part, with these strong words:

From the preachers *collectively* both the General Conference and General Superintendents derive their powers; and to the Annual Conferences jointly is reserved the power of recommending a change in our constitution. To you, therefore, your Superintendent not only submits the case, but he would advise you to adopt such measures as you in your judgment may deem most prudent, by which to recognize the adoption of the change proposed in the resolutions, conformably to the provision in the sixth Article of the constitution. Not that he believes the change would be an improvement of our system of government, or that it would fully answer the expectations of its advocates, but as an accommodating measure, on the utility of which men equally wise and good may, in some degree, differ in opinion. . . . With your recommendation and instructions, your representatives in the General Conference may act as they may judge most for the glory of God and the good of his Church. Thus introduced, the case would commend and establish the constitution, and form an effectual barrier against any future in-

fringement of the bulwark of our rights and liberties. This advice flows neither from the fear of frowns nor a desire of ease, honor, or profit. Let me be anything or nothing in these respects, so the work of the Lord may prosper.

This address being submitted to each of the Annual Conferences in turn, beginning with the Ohio Conference in September, 1821, the following result was noted—namely: Of the twelve Annual Conferences then constituting the connection, seven "judged the 'suspended resolutions' unconstitutional," and yet authorized the ensuing General Conference, as far as it could do so, to adopt them without alteration; "but the other five," to continue in Bishop McKendree's own words, "in which the steady friends and most powerful advocates of the proposed resolutions were found, refused to act on the address." Every Southern Conference except the Baltimore declared the resolutions unconstitutional, and Baltimore elected a solid delegation of "old-timers," including one of its newest transfers, Joshua Soule. Thus it was that the "father of the constitution," himself a Puritan, became closely identified with the stock and the ideals of the Cavaliers and Huguenots.

Thus I have rapidly, and also with as much fullness as the scope of this work permits, traced the events of a most turbulent period of American Methodist history as these events relate to or were influenced by the words and actions of the subject of my sketch. It is one of the most interesting and instructive passages in the body of human actions in general. It now only remains that the climacteric touch be added to round the chapter to its proper close. The General

Conference of 1824 sat in Baltimore, its opening session falling on the first day of May. On Saturday, May 22, as the Journal shows, D. Young introduced the following resolution—viz.:

> Whereas a majority of the Annual Conferences have judged the resolutions making the presiding elders elective, and which were passed and then suspended at the last General Conference, unconstitutional; therefore
>
> *Resolved,* That the said resolutions are not of authority, and shall not be carried into effect.

On Monday, May 24, the motion being called up for final disposition, the vote was taken by ballot, with the result that sixty-three members voted affirmatively and sixty-one negatively. The verdict of the Annual Conferences against the suspended resolutions was thus completed by a majority vote of the general body. We may so far anticipate as to say that this General Conference having referred the suspended resolutions to the General Conference of 1828 as unfinished business, that body finally disposing of them by declaring that they were "rescinded and made void."

His friends having with his own invaluable aid won a complete constitutional victory on the point so long at issue, the way was now open for Joshua Soule to accept ordination as a Methodist bishop. He could now wear the "miter" with "honor." Accordingly, on May 26, 1824, the election being called, on the second ballot he received sixty-five out of one hundred and twenty-eight votes, and was declared elected.

Doubly called of his brethren, he entered upon an episcopate that was to extend through forty-three eventful and laborious years.

CHAPTER XI.

Four Times Four.

Although the principles, fitness, and personal fortunes of Joshua Soule had triumphed, and the position he now occupied and the recognition he now enjoyed were such as any man of consecration and honor might covet, he had yet before him a season—an age, as the sensitive soul measures such things—in which he was to feel the attritions of prejudice and contend with the jealousies of men both small and great. Slowly and surely, however, partisan and personal oppositions gave way before a self-mastered spirit and the consecration of a saintly walk. When four times four—the years of four quadrenniums or Methodist olympiads—had passed over his head, he stood forth not only with ripened powers and catholic sensibilities, but with an official and personal influence rarely attained even in the great office of the Methodist episcopacy. To trace as definitely and as fully as we may the events which concern his life story during those sixteen years is to be our business in the present chapter.

There were now five Methodist bishops, the greatest number the connection had ever had at one time. The fifth member of the college, Elijah Hedding, was elected on the fourth ballot at the time of the second election of Joshua Soule. He was a native of New York, but had given the most of his life to New En-

gland. He is described as being a large and venerable-looking man. He was much revered for his wisdom, piety, and fidelity to duty. As a bishop he was popular, and lived and died in great honor.

Since there were now in office four effective general superintendents, it was understood that Bishop McKendree was to be released from the responsibility of attending the Annual Conferences or taking up any episcopal duty except such as his health might comfortably or safely permit. The four effective bishops divided the work of the connection amongst them in this way: Bishops George and Hedding took the Eastern and Northern Conferences, while to Bishops Roberts and Soule were assigned the Southern and Western sittings. After two years the order of this plan was to be reversed.

The first episcopal labors of Bishop Soule were to be given to the Conferences in the West. For this and other reasons he resolved to make his home in the State of Ohio. In the summer following the General Conference of 1824, with his family, and accompanied by Bishop McKendree and his traveling companion, Rev. J. B. Crist, he started for his new home and the scenes of his new labors. Numerous halts were made on the long journey, and the two bishops took turns at preaching to large and eager congregations gathered to hear them. The particular object of the senior bishop in making the journey was to visit and inspect the Wyandotte Indian Missions which had been established by him in the States of Ohio and Indiana. Together the bishops visited the settlements of the Indians, and were surprised and de-

lighted at the progress of the gospel amongst them. Bishop Soule preached to the tribe through an interpreter, and was so much impressed by the vision of those strangely inquiring faces upturned to him under the leaves of the summer forests that a memory of it lingered with him through his after life.

Bishop Roberts joined the episcopal party at the session of the Ohio Conference, and from there the three went to the session of the Kentucky Conference at Shelbyville. After this Bishops McKendree and Soule rode together to the seat of the Missouri Conference at Padfields, in Illinois. From that pioneer outpost they turned on their track and met the Tennessee Conference at Columbia. Winter having come on, and Bishop McKendree being extremely feeble, he turned in for a season of rest in the home of his brother, Dr. James McKendree, in Sumner County; while Bishop Soule, leaving him there, rode away to the seat of the Mississippi Conference at Tuscaloosa, Ala. As was the rule, Bishops Soule and Roberts presided jointly at this Conference. In the "History of Methodism in Mississippi," by Rev. John G. Jones, this brief sketch of the two superintendents is given:

> Bishop Soule was the embodiment of episcopal dignity, and seldom if ever indulged in anything like humor in connection with the business of an Annual Conference. Bishop Roberts was smartly spiced with innocent and useful wit and humor, and often in this way poured oil on the troubled waters of an earnest debate or relieved the embarrassed feelings of some timid speaker.

At the South Carolina, the Virginia, and the North Carolina Conferences the new bishop was amongst

close friends and men who ardently sympathized with his sacrifices and renunciations of previous years. Whether or not the knowledge of these affinities was a determinative in settling the arrangements of the bishops for the first two years of the quadrennium cannot now be determined; but however that may be, Joshua Soule found himself with his own. In the bosom of this fellowship he lingered and was rested from the weariness of his protracted labors.

The presidency in the early days of April of the Baltimore Conference completed his first round. Dr. Armstrong in the "History of the Baltimore Conference," referring to this visit, says:

> Seventy-nine preachers assembled in Baltimore on April 6, 1825, under the presidency of Bishop Soule. . . . The action of the preceding General Conference appears to have produced a lull in the agitation of controverted questions. It was the calm, however, before the storm.

This quadrennium was destined to be an era of radicalism and of extravagant demands by the laity and local preachers. Moved by the debates over the suspended resolutions, the latter began to clamor for an increased share in the government of the Church. The center of this activity was Baltimore, where a periodical was printed and where sundry conventions were held. From the view-point of to-day those early demands of the laity and the local preachers were not essentially unreasonable; they have all since been granted. But the movement for change was embodied in radicalism. It was influenced by feelings of prejudice against authority as constituted. It took no account of the laws of evolution and sequence.

Neither was it, as it appears, the voice of the majority, but rather the confused cry of a faction, the always dangerous organ of radicalism.

The rather remote result of the agitation of this era was the organization, in 1830, of the Methodist Protestant Church, a healthy and happy solution of many of the difficulties which had been created. This body of Wesleyans has at all times preached a sound gospel, stood in defense of the doctrines of Methodism, and manifested a tolerant and catholic spirit.

The presence of Joshua Soule in the episcopacy at this time has more and more the aspect of a special providence. Hedding had, it is freely charged, leaned toward the contentions of the reformers, as the radicals were generally called. "Bishop George, in judicial weakness, and Bishop Roberts, by amiable irresolution, in the primary movement had let the ship drive." Neither was a Church statesman and, though both were admittedly men of deep piety and high character, neither had any genius for affairs. Let us suppose that in the face of the conditions prevailing a radical had been elected to the episcopacy in 1820; the disastrous consequences can hardly be imagined. There would have been no declination of the high office of superintendent, and of course no other official protest against the resolutions than that offered by Bishop McKendree. As a consequence the radical resolutions would not have been "suspended," but put immediately into operation. The constitution, being once breached, would likely have crumbled before new and more determined attacks. What if Soule had not found that *one* necessary vote on the second

ballot in 1824? An anti-constitutionalist had gone into office in his stead, and McKendree, in feebleness extreme, had been left to wage the contest alone. That Methodism has been providentially guided through the years of its history these events abundantly show. In the study of these events the Methodist churchman of the present day may gain much profit.

From the session of the Baltimore Conference the weary and spirit-tried Soule slipped away to his home in Ohio, where he found a little rest until his labors with the Western Conference should begin anew.

It is now impossible, as it would be to a degree unprofitable, to follow the horseback advances of this early nineteenth century bishop through his extended see, embracing prairies, mountains, swamps, pine barrens, shorelands, and valleys. It was the old track of Asbury, but how changed, even in these dozen years! Interminable links of meadows and farms, villages, cities, groaning quays, and falling forests marked the reaches where Asbury met silence and nature's unbroken reign.

A noteworthy incident opens the narrative for the year 1826. With Bishop McKendree, Soule presided over the Virginia Conference at Portsmouth, the session beginning February 15. There was initiated the movement for the founding of a high-grade literary institution, out of which movement grew the foundation of the present Randolph-Macon College. With the knowledge that most of our Church schools and colleges have their roots so deeply set in our history, it is surprising to hear in this day of secular ideals

that by invoking the rule of Corban they may be removed from the Church's life and authority.

We have seen how dear to the heart of Bishop Soule was the memory of his part in the organization of the General Missionary Society. On May 15 the seventh anniversary of the society was observed in a service in historic John Street Chapel. In this meeting, presided over by Bishop McKendree, Soule and the other distinguished founder, Nathan Bangs, with Hedding, Wilbur Fisk, and Freeborn Garrettson, took part.

The unity of the episcopacy has been from the beginning a cardinal tenet in Methodist polity. Asbury and Whatcoat, and then Asbury and McKendree, had lived and wrought together as one soul. McKendree and Soule were so knit together in thought and desire that they usually made one utterance. But from the beginning McKendree and his colleagues, George and Roberts, and particularly the former, were seldom able to see eye to eye; nevertheless, they wrought together as yokefellows. In the trying times now on the Church the necessity for a singleness of purpose in the episcopacy was great. To effect this unity it was arranged that the bishops should meet yearly for the purpose of considering the whole work, agreeing on general policies and discharging such duties as required their joint action. The first of these meetings was held in Philadelphia April 13-18, 1826. Bishops George and Hedding were at the time presiding over the Philadelphia Conference. Bishops McKendree and Soule came up from the South. The minutes of the meeting show that Bishop Roberts was

absent. The bishops' meeting became at once, and has ever since continued to be, an important function of Church administration.

It cannot be said, however, that this first meeting of the bishops accomplished much or gave great promise of future accord. A delegate to the British Conference was to be elected, but on a suitable person the bishops could not agree, and that matter had to be decided by the next General Conference. Also the proposal of the senior bishop for Bishops George and Hedding to take the Western and Southern Conferences, exchanging with Bishops Roberts and Soule, was declined by the first two. Soule therefore continued on the Southern and Western circuit. Not for years after his election was he once in charge of the more northern and New England Conferences, and Hedding remained a stranger to the Methodists of the South. Thus early did the lines of sectionalism begin to show. Soule became a Southerner by affiliation and the law of gravity.

The barbs of criticism which pricked the sensibilities of the silent and self-contained ecclesiastic were occasionally transformed into the sword edge of a determined judgment. At the session of the South Carolina Conference held at Augusta, Georgia, January 11, 1827, Bishop Soule preached "a very popular sermon" on "The Perfect Law of Liberty," and at the request of the Conference the same was printed. Ever-watchful eyes were following his daily acts and words. It soon began to be charged in a more or less public way that the teaching of this sermon was unsound in some of its main points, particularly as to the duty of

Christians to observe the Sabbath. The names of Wilbur Fisk and John Emory were prominently connected with these charges, and it has been frankly averred that their purpose was to remove Soule from the episcopacy. It may be doubted that they cherished so extreme a purpose, but that they desired to see him reprimanded or otherwise seriously disciplined there can be no doubt. These charges gaining currency, the Southern and Western Conferences, particularly the former, came to the Bishop's defense in a determined way. The South Carolinians, led by Dr. Capers, threw down a challenge to the Bishop's accusers. The Mississippi Conference, where the Bishop presided and preached, probably repeating the South Carolina discourse, in the following autumn gave it out that the Bishop's orthodoxy went without question. At the General Conference the matter took shape in the hands of his critics. A member of the New England Conference had been expelled for heterodox teachings—teachings not different from those sought to be fixed upon Soule. The expelled New Englander appealed to the General Conference. The case was discussed by Fisk, Emory, and others, and the brilliant orations of Fisk were seen by Soule's friends to be an unconcealed purpose to bring the sermon of the Bishop before an inquisitorial board of the Conference. The New England case being affirmed, a resolution was offered by L. McCoombs and T. Merritt (the latter Soule's old-time colleague) to the effect that the General Conference go at once into an investigation of the charge of heresy brought against the Bishop.

In the meantime Bishop Soule, still keeping silence, caused printed copies of his discourse to be laid upon the seats of the delegates, that each might read and judge for himself. The resolution of inquisition being referred to the Committee on Episcopacy, that committee on the following day submitted a report entirely exculpating the Bishop from the charge of heresy or of teaching any doctrine inconsistent with the Articles of Religion. This sermon, which was sought in those exciting days to be relegated to the *index expurgatorius,* was in later years printed in full in the *Methodist Pulpit, South,* a classic publication, now an heirlooom in many a Methodist library.

The charges sought to be established against Bishop Soule's orthodoxy marked the highest point of excitement and party contention in the General Conference of 1828. Otherwise it was a conservative body, and its proceedings were characterized by displays of mutual confidence, brotherly love, and unselfish consideration for the interests of the Church. The "suspended resolutions" were finally disposed of, as we have seen. The demands of the local preachers and laity were dealt with in a paper written by John Emory breathing temperate, kindly sentiments, but firmly pointing out the way of conciliation and agreement. The General Conference was sitting in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, a city of the prophetic West, and in that fact the delegates read an inspiring pledge for Methodism. A new era had dawned.

The broad and tolerant spirit with which this Conference began and closed its work was emphasized in the amicable way in which provision was made for

the separation into a new jurisdiction of the Conference in Canada. This action had a historic bearing on the great "separation" of 1844 and on the attitude of Bishop Soule in that crucial time. But all this will be discussed in a later and more pertinent connection.

In the summer succeeding the General Conference death visited the ranks of the episcopacy. On August 23, while sojourning in Staunton, Va., Bishop George expired in the sixty-first year of his age. Bishop George was a man of deep piety, very simple in his manners, and a strong and even powerful preacher. He seems never to have acquired a very safe knowledge of men, and was a stranger to the diplomacies of the world. The mistakes into which he fell are attributable more to this lack of insight on the one hand and of a worldly-wise outlook on the other than to the absence of sincerity or genuineness from his motive. He was a frank and open opponent, never hiding his purposes in doubtful words. When he blundered, it was done honestly. He was genuinely lamented in death. His removal laid heavy burdens on his colleagues, and the greater weight fell on the shoulders of the youngest and strongest—Joshua Soule.

An impressive physical presence is a happy accompaniment of intellectual individuality. All classes of people were constantly impressed with the mark of nobility which nature had put upon the form and features of Joshua Soule. In the autumn of 1829, while on his way to the seat of the Holston Conference at Abingdon, Va., he halted for the night at a wayside tavern. The porter of the establishment was a young

and typical Irishman, who, in the absence of the proprietor, received the guest. On returning to the premises and learning that a stranger had arrived, the landlord asked: "Who is it, Pat?" "Sure, sor," returned the porter, "an' Oi don't roightly know; but Oi'll stake me faith that he's ayther a bishop or a gineral, sor."

At a still more Southern Conference in the same year the feeling got abroad that the new bishop, being from New England, would naturally be loaded with "Yankee notions" and be out of harmony with his Southern fellows; but long before he had finished the work of the session they voted him the frankest, most natural, as also "the greatest and most affectionate" of men.

As a characteristic incident of Bishop Soule's experience during the quadrennium between 1828 and 1832 may be cited his visit to the Baltimore Conference in 1830. The body sat in the historic old Light Street Church on March 10. It was at the height of the "reform" movement, but the controversy was now no longer inside the Conference. "Great peace and unanimity of feeling prevailed" therein, though "a few cases of trying character occurred." *The Itinerant,* a local Church journal, gave this account of the services of the Sabbath:

> On Sunday the weather was unusually fine, and a scene of more than ordinary interest was presented to many of the friends of religion in Baltimore. Several clergymen of other Churches politely tendered their houses of worship for the services of the Methodist preachers, and we believe that between forty and fifty officiated in the different congregations

during the day. Bishop Soule delivered at Caroline Street Church in the morning a most interesting and impressive discourse on "The Authority and Duties of the Christian Ministry," after which he ordained eleven deacons. The sermon was alike eloquent and able, and furnished a striking specimen of that boldness and depth of thought and original, just, and energetic application of it for which, we believe, Mr. Soule is distinguished. The congregation, though overflowing, was serious and attentive throughout the discourse, and at times many were deeply affected. The Bishop himself wept when he touched upon the extent of the commission and the promise, "Lo, I am with you," and seemed to regret that he could not call back the days of youth and devote another life to the preaching of the gospel. Deep, we believe, was the conviction felt by many that eloquence more than human was there, and that God of a truth was in his holy temple to bless the administration of his word.

During all these years the Bishop's home was at Lebanon, Ohio, and much of the time he was distressed by afflictions in his family. Several of his children were of delicate frame and suffered much from disease. One can imagine what heaviness of longing he must have carried about in his continent-wide wanderings as he remembered the lonely wife and her cares of love and responsibility.

In the autumn of 1830, as had been the pleasant fortune of former years, Bishops Soule and McKendree met at several of the Western and Southern Conferences. Before me is an autograph letter from Bishop McKendree, dated at Fountain Head, Tenn., the home of his brother, Dr. James McKendree, in which he refers to these meetings and also to his fast-failing health. This reference to his growing physical weakness was evidently meant to introduce the ven-

erable Bishop's plan for bequeathing his small earthly accumulations "to the support of the gospel committed to the itinerants." This letter of confidence between men who lived with but one thought contains a sentence which the men of this day may profitabley ponder. "Should our itinerant plan," writes McKendree, "with an effective general superintendency, remain after the next General Conference, I now intend to transfer my care in the management and my responsibility in the appropriation of what I am providentially possessed of to them [*i. e.*, the preachers] and trust in the Lord." Even at that day McKendree had fears that the spirit of radicalism might successfully assert itself in the alteration of the fundamentals of Methodist polity. The cavils and criticisms of to-day are mild compared with those that fretted the reverend ears of the immediate successor of Asbury. A companion document to the letter above described is the original copy of a resolution offered in the Illinois Conference as the result of a suggestion from Bishop Soule outlining a plan for applying the bequest of Bishop McKendree, then deceased, for the benefit of an institution of learning for the joint use of the Illinois and Missouri Conferences. It was not only an act of official duty, but a fealty of love and friendship that made Soule desire to see the bequest of his departed father and colleague handled so as to count to the uttermost. But the record of this bequest has put us some years ahead of the current of our story.

The General Conference of 1832 convened in Philadelphia, the scene of the first Methodist Conference ever held in America, in 1773. The opening exercises

were conducted by Bishop Soule, who also read the Episcopal Address, of which he was the author, as he had been of the one submitted to the General Conference four years before. This address particularly called the attention of the Conference to the subject of missions and temperance and to the necessity of strengthening the episcopacy in view of the death of Bishop George and the enlargement of the work. The Committee of Episcopacy recommended the election of two additional bishops, and, on the twenty-second day of the sitting, the vote being taken, James O. Andrew and John Emory were elected on the first ballot, the former receiving 140 votes and the latter 135 out of a total of 223 cast. Bishop Andrew and Bishop Soule were to repeat in their close episcopal and personal affiliation the confidence which the former had sustained with Bishop McKendree. In a time to come they were also to suffer together for a cause not unlike that first to which Soule had offered as a sacrifice his first great renunciation. Emory was his old antagonist on many a field of debate and contention, but Soule received his new colleague as a brother and took him to his heart. The friendship which subsisted between them was genuine, and the time came when Emory fully confessed to Soule his conviction that in the old-time issues which they had joined his colleague was right, and by his course had saved the Church.

The General Conference of 1832 is notable as a session pervaded by the spirit of fellowship and good will; there were no factions in the body. The ghost of partisanship seems to have fled the scene entirely.

It was Bishop McKendree's last General Conference. Feeble and leaning on his staff, he blessed his sons and committed to them the inheritance which he had so long guarded with vigilance and devotion. The Conference completed the action necessary to settle in the constitution the proviso giving the Annual Conferences jointly with the General Conference power to alter any of the restrictive rules except the first. It also recommended a decrease in the ratio of representation from the Annual Conferences, and recognized the right of fractional constituencies to representation. The adjournment was taken amid conditions of peace and hopefulness.

As in other quadrenniums since his election, the labors of Bishop Soule were confined largely to the South and West. In the autumn of 1834 he presided over the Ohio Conference at Circleville, at which session an interesting affair came up which fully illustrates the character of Soule for courage and faithfulness to conviction. The history of the incident has been preserved to us by one of the parties chiefly interested. Jacob Young, who had been friendly and even helpful to the Bishop, sought to use his influence in a somewhat irregular way. In fine, he desired a certain appointment made which both the Bishop and his advisers disapproved of. Discovering this opposition, he sought to have the Conference ask for the appointment. The Bishop put the question, but took occasion to say to the body: "It makes no difference which way you vote, I shall not make the appointment." "Pope" was the epithet which Young and his partisans visited upon the Bishop. Perhaps many like charges are as

groundless as was this. A fiery Virginia itinerant once brought against him an accusation of partisanship and threatened to "write him up in the papers." "And I," replied the Bishop, "shall not write the scratch of a pen in answer." In every issue he proceeded on the belief that he was to live forever and could afford to wait for his vindication.

The year 1835 brought Soule the sorrow of his life. On March 5, at his brother's home in Sumner County, Tennessee, Bishop William McKendree laid down his Churchly office and was gathered to the rest of his fathers. The second of the preëminent triumvirate of great American bishops was gone. The third remained to preserve the traditions of Asburian Methodism to a time beyond the sounds of strife and war. The might of early Methodism completed itself in Asbury, McKendree, and Soule. In December of the same year in which Bishop McKendree died Bishop Emory was called from his earthly labors, being killed in falling from his carriage. Thus was the episcopacy again reduced to four members; and as the health of both Bishop Roberts and Bishop Hedding was not robust, the labors of the office fell heavily upon Soule and his younger colleague, Andrew.

It was during this quadrennium, and chiefly in Soule's great diocese in the West, that the movement first started by Asbury and Boehm to evangelize the German immigrants took effective and successful shape. Henry Boehm lived to be more than a hundred years of age, dying in 1875, and was the last of the preachers who remembered the Christmas Conference and the beginnings of Episcopal Methodism.

Methodism now manifested destiny and indicated the course of her empire by calling the seventh Delegated General Conference (the session of 1836) to meet in the city of Cincinnati. To Soule the assembling of this Conference was like the coming of a guest to his own house, for Cincinnati was the center of the territory which he had mainly cultivated since his acceptance of the episcopal office. His colleagues, Roberts, Hedding, and Andrew, were present also. The body was much smaller than its predecessor, owing to the reduced ratio of representation. Bishop McTyeire says that it was made up of unusually able men.

The General Conference had not legislated on the subject of slavery since 1824, nor had any important action relating thereto been taken since the General Conference of 1820. That session took from the Annual Conferences the right "to form their own regulations about the buying and selling of slaves." The Church had been living all the while under the rule established in 1816, which directed that "no slaveholder shall be eligible to any official station in our Church hereafter where the laws of the State in which he lives will admit of emancipation and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom." Abolitionism, or "modern abolitionism," as it was styled, was a new phase of the slavery agitation. It was rapidly becoming a political issue, but the Methodist Church at this time did not sympathize with the doctrine which its advocates preached. The general position of the Methodists then was: "Slavery is an evil, a gigantic evil; but it is a political institution, settled in the constitutions of many of the States, and it is

therefore not within the power of the Church to alter these conditions. It is our duty to bear the gospel to master and slave alike, and to give such directions and make such rules as will express the ultimate of our power to mitigate the evil." This was the doctrine of Soule and those who stood with him in that day when calmness of thinking on this matter was both possible and general.

Strongly and unqualifiedly did the General Conference of 1836 express itself on the subject of "modern abolitionism." There lies before me as I write an original copy of the "extra" issued by the *Western Christian Advocate,* Cincinnati (Dr. Thomas A. Morris, Editor), of the date of May 21, 1836, containing the anti-abolition resolutions as passed in the body by a vote of 122 affirmants to 11 dissidents. The extra carried a vigorous editorial venturing the hope that "an expression of the opinions of the General Conference so strong and deliberately made will have much influence with all unreasonable brethren who have unfortunately engaged in the visionary and mischievous project of modern abolitionism."

This whole question is no longer a living one, and nobody is more certain than is the author of this biography of the unprofitableness of its discussion in this day. But it may be remarked that it seems incredible that these utterances should be found in the Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America *only eight years before 1844!* The times were rapidly shaping toward a change.

Three additional bishops were elected at this sitting.

They were Beverly Waugh, of the Baltimore Conference, Thomas A. Morris, of the Ohio Conference, and Wilbur Fisk, of the New England Conference. It was a trio of remarkable men; and especially was the last and youngest, Wilbur Fisk, a man of most noteworthy character and gifts. In truth, Methodism has produced in all its history few, if any, men of a finer mold, a loftier and more generous spirit, or a more genuine culture and intellectual zest. He was the educational leader of Methodism in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century. He was forty years old when elected. His health was feeble, and he was wedded to the work of an educator, and for these reasons declined consecration to the office proffered him by the votes of his brethren.

Bishop Soule was for many years a sufferer from asthma and rheumatism, and for a long while previous to the General Conference of 1836 his health had been steadily declining. In view of this fact, the Conference released him from the obligation to travel on full time and put him under orders of his own discretion. But he had two colleagues (Roberts and Hedding), who were more feeble than himself, and the work which his discretion or other propulsion induced him to undertake during the next quadrennium was by no means the task allotment of an invalid. Perhaps his greatest service to the Church during the earlier years of the new quadrennium was as a conciliator of disturbed sentiment on the new aspect of the old issue of slavery. Being a native of New England and of known courage and moderation, his word was usually accepted as oracular by both sides of the new contro-

versy. Bishop Morris appealed to him for help in the New Hampshire sitting in 1837, and there was also a need for his counsel in the West, as there was in the South, though it must be known that in the latter section the call for a moderator grew out of antipathetical sentiment. But it was this man's ability to command the respect and become the successful adviser of dissevered brethren that made him in that day a minister of providence.

In an unpublished autograph letter from Bishop Waugh to Bishop Soule, written from Burlington, New Jersey, on May 7, 1839, I learn much that concerns the course of this story for the quadrennium. Bishop Soule, suffering from asthmatic trouble and rheumatism, had been unable to attend the bishops' meeting in Baltimore. Bishop Waugh wrote to consult him concerning the centenary of Methodism, the hundredth anniversary of the organization of the United Societies in England, to be celebrated that year. This letter also discloses the fact that abolitionism was greatly disturbing the Churches in New England. It shows further that it had been arranged for Bishop Soule to visit the New England and Maine Conferences at their next sittings. "Your presence and aid at the two Conferences, reverend and dear sir," continues the younger colleague, "will be more than desirable; they will be necessary. . . . Let me therefore earnestly entreat you to come." The publication of this letter entire would be of curious interest, but of what use? The memory of Soule does not need it. How strong and swerveless he was, and how much trusted he was until prejudice veiled the eyes of many,

this letter is not now needed to show. A last item in this communication intimates that Soule was also committed to take a large share of the "next Southwestern routes"—that is, the Southern Conferences for 1839-40. Before the time for meeting those obligations arrived he had been almost perfectly restored to health and again, though nearing his sixtieth year, enjoyed all but the vigor and buoyancy of his youth. A new honor and an inspiring experience awaited him.

CHAPTER XII.

THE NEW WORLD'S MESSENGER TO THE OLD.

THE paternal concern of Wesley for his spiritual children in the two hemispheres caused him to make much of the idea of a continuous unity of Methodism. This thought was strong with Coke and Asbury, as also with their contemporaries. But though Wesley's thought was of a species of organic unity, time soon dispelled the idea as illusory and impossible. However, a most real unity of spirit has always subsisted between the two great divisions of the Wesleyan family in the Old and the New World. The substantial expression of that unity has been seen in the persons of fraternal visitors who have since before the middle of the last century regularly borne from one section to the other official greetings and served as media for the exchange of kindred sentiments and also as agents for the execution of more practical commissions.

In the earlier decades of organized Methodism in America Dr. Coke was the normal medium—in fact, the living link—between the two sections, and this was one of the functions which gave to him the well-merited title of "Foreign Minister of Methodism." The last visit of Dr. Coke to his American brethren occurred during the General Conference of 1804. Messrs. Black and Bennett, two Wesleyan preachers

in Nova Scotia, visited the General Conference of 1816 to discuss the affairs of the Canadian stations, the war with Great Britain having sown the seeds of contention and estrangement between the American and Canadian Methodists. They were, however, not regularly commissioned delegates, and their instructions confined them to the business matters upon which they had been charged. Mr. Black had indeed been present at the organization of the Church, in 1784, and was then, as in 1816, cordially received and treated as one of the American itinerants and not as a stranger. It was not until 1820 that a messenger regularly commissioned was sent by the Americans to their brethren in Europe. In that year the General Conference appointed Rev. John Emory, later elected to the episcopacy, to visit the Wesleyan Conference in England, primarily for the purpose of adjusting the relations of the Canadian Societies to the two Conferences. He was also charged to bear to the Methodists of the British Isles the fraternal greetings of their brethren in America and to solicit an exchange of fraternal visits at such times as might prove mutually satisfactory. Mr. Emory accomplished his mission in a most creditable and successful manner. His visit put in motion the influences which led finally to the establishment under happy conditions of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada, and also in the restoration of the old-time familiar relations between the American and the English Conferences.

In 1824 the Wesleyan connection made its response to these fraternal negotiations by sending as their messengers to the Americans Rev. Richard Reece

and his companion, Rev. John Hannah, each of whom was later honored with an election to the presidency of the Conference in Great Britain.

The first regularly commissioned fraternal delegate sent by the American connection to the Motherland was Dr. William Capers, elected to discharge that office by the General Conference of 1828. The call of Dr. Emory in 1820 had been largely fiscal and for the purpose of opening up an understanding touching a regular exchange of personal visitations. The embassy of Drs. Reece and Hannah was the first in the now long list of official interchanges, so that the visit of Dr. Capers is counted the first return from the American side. Dr. Capers reported at the session of the British Conference held in City Road Chapel, London, in the month of August, 1828. His address aroused great enthusiasm, and the Conference passed, in recognition of his presence, a set of resolutions couched in terms of eloquence and admiration, thanking him for "the great ability, Christian spirit, and brotherly kindness with which he had discharged the duties of his honorable mission."

It was expected and greatly desired that the British brethren would send a representative to the American Conference at its sitting in Pittsburg, in 1832, but the failure to have this wish realized probably came about through an effort on the part of the Americans to secure in that visitor the illustrious Methodist scholar and commentator, Adam Clarke. It now appears that, in pursuance of that wish, Bishop McKendree named an out-of-Conference committee to communicate with him on the subject of the visit. This

committee consisted of Messrs. J. Emory, B. Waugh, N. Bangs, F. Hall, and George Suckley. The reply to the communication came in course. This letter was published by Bishop Paine in his "Life of McKendree," and so has become familiar to many Methodists, but the special interest which now attaches to it for me is that the original autograph copy lies beside this page as I write. It is inscribed in a neat, bold hand and the letters are well formed, though the writer was then beyond three-score and ten. Had the letter reached him a few months earlier, he would most certainly have endeavored to meet the wishes of the committee, so he wrote them; but his engagements were then too many and too important to be canceled. His age also had to be considered. The letter closes with felicitations and some practical advice to the preachers in America as coming from a patriarch of the Methodist family.

In the address of the British Conference of 1835 to the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America it is said:

> We have a confidential agent in the Western Continent in the person of our beloved brother, Rev. William Lord; an opportunity is thus presented for renewing the affectionate fraternal intercourse of the two great families of Wesleyan Methodism.

There is a degree of ambiguity in this language, but it was evidently considered and accepted as an official appointment in the line of fraternal visitation. Dr. Wilbur Fisk, who was offered the bishopric in Canada and who was elected bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America in

1836, had been traveling in Europe during parts of that and the previous year, and had visited the British Conference in the capacity of a fraternal messenger. Dr. Stephen Olin, who spent the years between 1839 and 1841 traveling in Europe and the East, made a fraternal call upon the British Conference at its session at Liverpool in 1839.

The first regular official visitor from the British Conference returning the call of Dr. Capers was not named until 1840, when the distinguished Scotch-English preacher and ex-President of the Conference, Dr. Robert Newton, was commissioned with a fraternal message to the General Conference which sat that year in Baltimore. The eloquent visitor was not only "heard with delight and profit from the pulpit and platform, but he preached in the open air to immense crowds, showing on a Baltimore square the secret of gospel power that had triumphed on Moorfield Common a hundred years before."

After Dr. Newton had delivered his address to the Conference, and before his departure, it became generally known that he had expressed the sentiment that it would be gratifying both to himself and to his brethren in Europe should the Conference see fit to send as the bearer of its next fraternal message Rev. Bishop Soule. Accordingly, on June 2 Bishop Soule was appointed to visit the British Conference at its sitting in 1842. At the Bishop's own request Rev. Thomas B. Sargent, a man of many attainments and a leader in his day, was appointed to be his traveling companion. The extent to which the personality and powers of Bishop Soule had impressed the wise and

pious Newton was to be repeated through the Methodist connection in England and Ireland when the great Methodist leader from the New World appeared in the two Conferences.

The original of the passport of Bishop Soule meant for use on this journey is in my hands. It was issued in what was then a usual form by the Department of State at Washington City, and bears date of April 8, 1842. It instructs "all whom it may concern to permit safely and freely to pass Bishop Joshua Soule, a citizen of the United States, and in case of need to give him all lawful aid and protection." The "description" carried prominently on the face of the passport is interesting as giving a sort of pen portrait of the Bishop as he was "taken" by the officials. It is as follows—viz.:

> Age, 61 years; stature, 5 feet and 11 inches; forehead, high; eyes, blue; nose, Roman; mouth, ordinary; chin, ditto; hair, gray; complexion, fair; face, oval.

The port and customs indorsement on this folio of parchment give us a sort of chart of the Bishop's journey in Europe made in connection with his official visit. The English customs and inspectors seem to have taken his papers with great deference, as no indorsement of an English hand is found on them; but the French officials wrote upon the folio until it has somewhat the appearance of a palimpsest. Indorsements were made at Calais, Paris, Boulogne, and elsewhere. Equally interesting is a companion relic of this passport, resting in the collection before referred to. It is a cabin plan of the trans-Atlantic

steamer Stephen Whitney, upon which the Bishop made his outgoing voyage. The stateroom to be occupied by the Bishop and his companion were carefully marked with red ink, and a note was made by the ship house clerk on the margin showing that the reservation had been made for "Bishop Soule and his friend." Even then the Atlantic steamers (though it was long before the days of the modern "greyhounds") were an embodiment of much real comfort, and it is pleasant to look on this blueprint diagram of the good ship Stephen Whitney and think of the invigorating days spent by the tired Bishop and his companionable friend on her ample deck ways and in the wide and well-furnished saloons. It was then not a matter of four days and some hours and minutes across the Atlantic, but of a fortnight or more even under the power of steam.

I can find no definite information as to when the Stephen Whitney sailed from New York, but from letters written by Drs. Durbin and Sewall in Paris and addressed to the Bishop in London, I take it that he was expected to reach that city somewhere near the first of June. Durbin and his companion were on the way to the Mediterranean and the East. Their letters were postmarked "Paris, June 3," and the London stamp shows that they reached that city on June 11. But the Bishop and Dr. Sargent had already reached London and had proceeded on their way to Ireland. This I conclude from the fact that the packet was readdressed to Dublin. As the letter of Dr. Durbin forecasts somewhat the expected movements of the Bishop on the Continent, and as it was the first

literary output of a journey whose story, being written into several volumes, added no little to the writer's fame, I have decided to print it in full. It affords, in addition to its relation to the matters above mentioned, a pleasant glimpse into the experience of an American of the "forties" traveling in Europe.

PARIS, June 3, 1842.

My Dear Brother: By the advice of every intelligent gentleman met we have been induced to forego visiting the Irish Conference and the pleasure of meeting you and Dr. Sargent there. We have clearly ascertained that it will be impossible for us to see Switzerland and the Alps to advantage after the British Conference; and if we go to the Irish Conference now, we cannot visit both Switzerland and Germany. It therefore becomes necessary for us to change our route and proceed from Paris to Switzerland, probably cross over the Alps at Mt. Cenis to Turin and Milan, then recross them by the Simplon to Geneva, thence to the Rhine, down the Rhine to Antwerp, and steamboat to London about the first of August. Then we shall have the pleasant months of August and September at our command for England. When we leave England we propose to pass through Germany by Hamburg, Leipsic, Dresden, Berlin, Vienna, and thence to Italy; but further information may cause us to alter our plans. We have yielded to this the more readily as we do not know what is your route or how far you propose to extend it. We are not positive that we will proceed to Egypt. This we will determine when we reach London. I have seen General Cass, and he very strongly urges us to go to Egypt and Palestine. He has been over these countries. He advises us to go from Vienna to Constantinople down the Danube before we visit Italy, but of this we must consider after we reach London. Perhaps then your course will be fixed so that we can know how to proceed.

I need not speak to you of Paris, as I suppose you will visit it. I have taken a good deal of pleasure in the Wesley-

an Mission, and have preached for them once. We are in excellent health. Both Mr. Carlton and Brother Sewall have very much improved in appearance and health. I hope you will have had a short, pleasant passage, and that you are in fine health and spirits, and that your visit to the English Methodist Church may be a blessing to it and an honor to us, of which I cannot doubt.

Until we see you, if the Lord will, in London, be pleased to accept my best wishes and earnest desire for your health and peace, and present us kindly to Brother Sargent.

Your brother, JOHN P. DURBIN.

The Rev. Bishop Joshua Soule.

The Irish Conference met in the city of Dublin Friday, June 24, 1842, Rev. James Dixon, President of the Wesleyan Connection, presiding. This was the first meeting between Dr. Dixon and Bishop Soule, but their spirits embraced each other in the full sense of the kinship of greatness and deathless confidence. The admiration of Dr. Dixon for Bishop Soule was enthusiastic, and grew with the years. When a fraternal delegate to the General Conference of the Methdist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, in 1848, the magnet of Bishop Soule's personality not only drew him southward in visitation, but ravished anew his thoughts of admiration and respect for him. He wrote after his return to his own country these most appreciative words:

Many of the brethren accompanied us to the vessel to bid us farewell. Amongst the rest was Bishop Soule. I saw him for the last time with an aching heart, amongst the group of preachers and people. It is sad to think of seeing him no more. I felt this keenly as I turned my eyes from him with the certainty that it was a final adieu. A noble man! One

of the first spirits in America! In bearing a perfect gentleman, manly, courteous, and dignified; in principle, feeling, and demeanor a true Christian; in character and caliber of mind strong, clear, masculine; in moral force firm, unwavering, inflexible; in official life judicious, prudent, and decided in his adherence to settled constitutional rule, but practical and wise; in evangelical toils and labors as abundant as any living man in the Church; and in spirit calm, courageous, and active. For a fortnight I had enjoyed the happiness of Bishop Soule's society, and my inmost soul reverenced and did homage to him on taking a last look at his manly and venerable form.

The appearance of Bishop Soule and his associate, Dr. Sargent, before the Irish Conference aroused in the entire body the most genuine enthusiasm and became a beginning of dates. There was something in the American Bishop's appearance as in his manner, intonations and majesty of expression that appealed with special directness to the Irish temperament. It was the measure of Celtic blood in him, and the balanced mastery and kindness of his bearing. In his addresses and sermons he fairly captured the multitudes, and everywhere he went in the island the most genuine deference was paid him. He was the first American Methodist bishop to visit the Old World. Dr. Coke was never thought of in Europe in connection with his American episcopate, and not many of that generation even remembered the "Foreign Minister of Methodism." To the Irish Methodists Bishop Soule was officially the same as one of the lords spiritual of the Anglican Establishment, and by reason of his brotherly and tender spirit he became a thousand times more lordly in fact. When the Bish-

op, speaking for himself and his companion, protested the kindness and consideration of the Conference, saying, "You have received us as angels unawares," a strong and heartful voice cried in response: "And angels you have proven yourselves to be."

While at the session of the Irish Conference the Bishop heard a sorrowful note running through the reports concerning the net loss in the membership in the island. Thousands of Methodists had left the sod to find homes on foreign shores. By far the larger number of these had gone to America. The Bishop gave a special pledge that, inasmuch as America owed so much to Ireland because of her gift of Strawbridge and Embury, these Irish Wesleyans should be ministered to in their new home. This pledge is gratefully referred to in the Annual Address of the Irish Conference for that year. In the Address of the British Conference to the Irish brethren the following eloquent reference is made to the honored visitors:

Among other incidents which have given more than ordinary interest to our present Conference, we cannot omit mentioning the presence and ministerial communications of Bishop Soule and his clerical companion, Rev. Thomas B. Sargent, from the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America. From them we have had lucid and powerful expositions of those holy doctrines which, through the blessing of God on the preaching of the Wesleys, first raised our Societies into existence, and which, through the continuance of the same rich blessing, still nourish our people in newness of life. In the venerable Bishop we have discerned the same benignant, self-sacrificing, and undaunted spirit which animated the fathers of our own connection; and from his cheering statements we have received ample evidence that Wesleyan

Methodism, though varying in some adventitious circumstances, is the same in spirit, principle, and efficiency in both communities.

During his entire stay at the English Conference the Bishop met only such treatment as his exalted worth and his office as the representative of the most numerous body of Methodists in the world merited. Equally with their Irish brethren the English Wesleyans responded to the call of his lofty thought and fraternal sentiment. His Sabbath evening sermon before the Conference made a particularly profound impression, as the following official resolution entered upon the Journal of the session will show:

That the thanks of the Conference be presented to the Rev. Joshua Soule, D.D., one of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, for the sermon which he delivered in City Road Chapel on Sunday evening, July 31; and that he be earnestly requested to furnish a copy of it for publication in the *Magazine*.

At the Conference ordination service Bishop Soule was invited by the President, Dr. Hannah, to join in the laying on of hands. This he did, placing his hands on the head of each member of the class, and in doing so was permitted the then unrealized privilege of assisting to consecrate the most distinguished and most gifted preacher that Methodist England knew during the latter half of the nineteenth century. This was William Arthur, author of "The Tongue of Fire" and missionary captain of the Wesleyan hosts. Everywhere in England during his two months' stay the likeness of the American bishop to

the Iron Duke was remarked upon. This was a resemblance that did not come of chance, nor yet was it of that class of results flowing from a like mastery of spirit and purpose. Like the New World bishop, the Old World hero was of Norman-Celtic, or, more correctly, of Norse-Gaelic blood, and perhaps the lines of their heredity approached each other more nearly in the age behind the days of William Rufus than any genealogist could now tell. The claim that the heredity of the Wesleys is involved in this line is not a groundless one.

Before he left England Bishop Soule was asked by the Wesleyan Conference to sit for his portrait, and one of the most celebrated portrait painters of the realm was employed to do the work. It is doubtful if, in the whole history of Methodist fraternal intercourse, any messenger ever received such distinguished attentions and courtesies as were extended to Bishop Soule. In the Fraternal Address of the Conference sent the next year to the Church in America appears this reference to the Bishop's visit:

> The visit of your honored delegate, the venerable Bishop Soule, to our country was exceedingly welcome and gratifying to us. His kindly spirit in every season of our more private interviews with him, the lively interest which he took in all our concerns, whether domestic or foreign, the copious information with which he favored us concerning the plans, proceedings, and evangelical conquests of your branch of our Lord's universal Church, and his truly able and edifying public ministrations among us have left an impression on our minds which time will not easily efface. Long may he be spared in life, and blessed by our Heavenly Master as an instrument of yet greater and more extensive good! By the

care of divine providence he is now returned in saftey to your shores; and he will be able to supply you with intelligence of our movements, trials, and successes far beyond what we should be able to convey in any written communication.

This is the place to insert the record of a somewhat incongruous matter committed to the hands of Bishop Soule as the American Fraternal Messenger to England by the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada. From the moment the American Conference consented to the organization of the Canadian societies into an independent body there was friction between it and the missionaries of the Wesleyan connection in England. The situation was becoming more distressful every year, and the encroachments of the London missionaries upon the territory of their brethren went on without hindrance from headquarters. The British had in 1835 and 1836 retained Rev. William Lord in Canada as a confidential agent. It was thus that he became the fraternal visitor to the American Conference in 1836. The Canadians now besought Bishop Soule to use his influence while in England to secure an abatement of the fraternity-destroying conditions existing in their field. The original of the paper in which this request is made is before me. Its language is strangely like that of not a few letters from the border which I have met during the past twenty-five years in the newspapers of both Methodisms. The document consists of twelve legal cap pages inscribed in the clearest chirography and expressed in correct and forceful English. That the complainants had, or were convinced that they had, a cause, this paper leaves no ground for doubt. It bears the signature of

the President of the Canadian Conference, Rev. W. Ryerson, the most capable and statesmanlike man to be found in the early Canadian organization. There is not space in this biography for the whole of this historic writing, but parts of it bear so directly on the proper subject of my story that I venture to make an extract or two.

We beg most respectfully [the complainants say to Bishop Soule], to address you on a subject of great importance to our common Methodism and to its peaceful operations in upper Canada. We are induced to do so by our former connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, by the dutiful respect we owe to our venerable fathers and brethren of that Church, and by the high regard we have for yourself personally, known as you are to possess the most clear and comprehensive views of the characteristic principles and features of Methodism and to value the inviolable maintenance of them even more than your own existence. . . . Notwithstanding schisms created by the agents of the London Wesleyan Missionary Committee, we number 121 itinerant ministers and upward of 17,000 members.

In 1831 and 1832 correspondence took place between our Missionary Board and the Wesleyan Committee in London on the subject of their establishing separate societies in upper Canada. . . . You will perceive that our Conference was reduced to the alternative of having its fields of labor made an arena of strife or proposing some arrangement by which a union might be maintained.*

*The original of this paper was in the name of the family of Bishop McTyeire presented by the author of this biography to the Rev. James Young, D.D., fraternal delegate from the Methodist Church of Canada at the session of the General Conference held at Asheville, N. C., in May, 1910.

What action the Bishop took on this request we have no means of determining. That in his own wise, delicate, and entirely courteous way he brought the contention of the Canadian brethren before the authorities in England we have reason to believe from the following question in the British Minutes of that year—viz., "What is the decision of the Conference on those Canadian affairs which have this year been urged to its attention?" We doubt if the answer to that question was wholly satisfactory to the Canadians; but the issue, like many another in Methodism, has ceased to have relevancy.*

The Bishop's passport shows that, leaving England on his return journey, he reached France on August 7, 1842, and that he was in Paris on September 17. Beyond this I have been unable to trace the course of his continental travels. That they were not extended is certain. He must be in America in time to take up his share of the late autumn and winter Conference visitations, so he was soon upon the ocean and homeward bound, loaded with honors, thankful for abundant mercies, and filled with peace. Little did he then dream of the strife destined to break about him in the land and the Church he loved.

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*Some years later the wish of the Canadians for an understanding had a happy consummation in the union of the Wesleyan forces in the Dominion. The secret of how much the influence of the American delegate contributed to this end is with the other unrecorded facts of history.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHERE TWO SEAS MET.

NEITHER the motif nor the scope of this biography calls for a recital of the details of the melancholy history that fell to the Methodist Church between 1843 and 1845, the period of Bishop Soule's life to be covered by the present chapter. It will be sufficient to verify the incidents and events with which he was connected and determine the extent to which they were influenced by his utterances and actions.

When the fraternal delegate of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America to the Wesleyan connection in England reached his native shores in the autumn of 1842, he was made aware that a material change had taken place in the public sentiment of the Church in the North and East during the time of his sojourn abroad.

The action of the General Conference of 1836 in declaring strongly, even radically, against abolitionism will be readily recalled by the reader. Two of the delegates in attendance upon that session were severely censured for visiting and speaking before an abolition meeting during the time of the Conference sitting. More than this, strong men like Wilbur Fisk, Bishop Hedding, Nathan Bangs, and Dr. Abel Stevens took the side of the Church, as expounded in the rule of 1816, on the subject of slavery, and sought to stem the rising tide of abolitionism in the Churches of their na-

tive section; but it soon began to be seen that radical views were destined to obtain. The two censured delegates, Messrs. Norris and Snorr, returned to their Conference (the New Hampshire), and were publicly approved by their constituency. Meetings to inveigh against the action of Church authorities were held, "appeals" were addressed to the Methodist public, and a newspaper was started in the interest of abolitionism in the Church. Then came the troubles experienced by the general superintendents in holding the Annual Conferences. "The older Bishops, Hedding and Soule, encountered rough seas, but weathered the storm with only slight damage." The other bishops, being less experienced, dreaded the call to preside over the New England Conferences; but their turn came. It has been noted already that, though Bishop Soule was during those years on the voluntary service list through invalidism, he was much burdened, and suffered above any of his colleagues because of these matters. Both he and Bishop Hedding were charged with autocracy and usurpation of power, and were slandered and roundly berated while presiding over Conferences. In their judgment of Bishop Soule the abolitionists were particularly severe. He was represented as saying that "he never had advised and never would advise the freeing or manumission of a slave;" while all his teachings, beliefs, and actions were contrary to such sentiments. But it booted him little to disavow them or to ask discipline against the authors of even more violent accusations. Acquittals for the offenders were the uniform answers.

The General Conference of 1840 came on, and still

the abolition sentiment inside the Church was unappreciable except in New England. In the Episcopal Address, of which Soule was the author, the whole question of slavery, as also the situation then existing in the Church which had grown out of the abolition agitation, was gone over. The majority still held to the traditional teaching of Methodism on the evils of slavery and the necessity for its extirpation, but disallowed the expediency of radical agitation, action, or utterance. There is neither common sense nor Christian logic in holding that the extirpation of American slavery had to come by the bloody path of war, or that violent disruptions of religious and social fabrics were necessary to emphasize its evils. Dr. Nathan Bangs, the historian, who has been frequently quoted in this biography and a man who was never suspected of the slightest pro-slavery tendency, writing in 1840, in the fourth volume of his history says:

> As it is not my wish to advert to abolitionism again, I will remark here that it has continued to agitate the Church from that time to this, much disturbing its peace and, in some of the Annual Conferences, distracting its councils, producing finally the secession of a few individuals. Indeed, it was feared for a time that its disastrous results would be extensively felt, particularly in some of the Eastern and Northern Conferences; but it has so far passed off in a much more quiet manner than was anticipated, and it is to be hoped that but few, comparatively, will be seriously and lastingly injured by these injudicious measures. Perhaps, however, a future day may disclose facts of a different character, and a future historian may be called to bear his testimony to a different result. Though it is somewhat difficult to reconcile the conduct of some few leaders in the ranks of abolitionism with a sincere regard to the interests of truth and righteousness, yet we are willing

to award to most of those who engaged in the controversy an honest desire to ameliorate the condition of the slave and to purify the Church from what they considered a sinful pollution, although we cannot but think that their measures were ill chosen, their arguments in the main defective, and their severe denunciations and personal criminations wholly unjustifiable.

Certain utterances in the above excerpt have an almost prophetic significance. They suggest what might have been. But for the unhappy events of 1844, the Methodist Church could no doubt have found some amicable and generally acceptable plan to free itself not only from the incidental embarrassments but also from the fact of slavery. But, again, what profit is there in this reflection? History has made itself otherwise. However, there was then with the majority of Methodists, and more especially with its great leaders, North and South, a sense of sanity, frankness, and sincerity that expressed a principle of life and action. That principle lived through the days of strife and lives today. It was embodied at that time in its chief exponent, Joshua Soule, and remained so embodied to the end of his illustrious life. The division of Methodism was fairly the fault of both sections, and its cure must come as the result of sacrifices made by each.

By 1840 plans were laid and completed for holding a Methodist abolition convention. It assembled in New York City, and was very largely attended; but within a year or two the extremists found that the Church was, as a whole, still out of sympathy with their doctrines. In 1842 the American Wesleyan Methodist Church was organized by the New England leaders of the abolition movement. The doctrines of this Church

were those of the parent Methodism, but no slaveholder could be an officer or even a member of it. As was true of the Methodist Protestant Church in its incipient stages, the newly established communion drew off a large element of disturbance, and for a time the whole Methodist connection wore an aspect of peace; but although that peace was accentuated by widespread revivals and phenomenal gains in Church membership, it was a tranquillity which had in it the potencies of disruption. The fruitfulness was in the less disturbed sections, while the diversion of the Wesleyan Methodist empiricists was disturbing to the mind of many who were otherwise inclined to quietness. There were now multitudes ready to be incited to radical demands where before they had accepted official advice to be at peace. Large numbers of the hitherto passively disposed clergy had come to the point where a radical leader of ability could move them to cast away the last vestige of conservatism. Such leaders, even scores of such, were not long wanting.

It was at this stage of sentiment that Bishop Soule returned from his transatlantic visit and took up his work in the Conferences.

It has been fitly and truthfully said concerning the attitude of Bishop Soule in the controversy of 1820-28 that "an orderly array of the facts is his vindication." That rule applies to his conduct at every stage of his history. With emphasis it applies to his actions and utterances during the trying period now under review. The negro slave had no truer friend nor one animated by a more sincere purpose to help than the now Senior Bishop of the Methodist Church. In the General Con-

ference of 1840 he pleaded, and put his plea into official statement, that the slave member of the Church be held a Christian brother, and that his word and profession be received with respect.

But it was not to the American plantation slave alone that the heart of this apostolic man went out. The whole African race was to him an object of solicitude. He contemplated the pagan bondage of the children of the Dark Continent, and saw it to be more intolerable than the bondage of their brethren on the plantations of the South. It was at this very juncture that he meditated and even devised a plan for making himself the apostle to Africa. Though with no longer a pledge of health before him, he wished to give some of his remaining strength and years to overseeing and building up the Church's mission in Liberia and adjacent parts. This is a page of history but little familiar to even the greatest admirers of Bishop Soule in this generation, and one which was long since lost sight of by those who desired to judge him uncharitably; but the history rests upon indubitable proof. The introduction at this point of an official letter, the autograph original of which is now in my possession, becomes not only pertinent but historically logical. The writer was a director of the Mission Board between 1840 and 1844:

NEW YORK, January 12, 1843.

Rev. Bishop Soule—My Dear Sir: At the last meeting of our Missionary Board it was resolved that it was inexpedient to advise you to visit the mission in Africa at the present. The Board was led to this conclusion from the belief that your health would greatly suffer from an exposure to the climate of that country, knowing the determination you had formed to remain in the country long enough to enable you to become

acquainted with the state of the work within the borders of the Liberia Mission.

It was the opinion of Dr. Goheen that you might visit Africa with comparative safety, provided you would consent to lodge nightly on board of some vessel at anchor off the shore.

As I have now made known to you officially the action of our Board, I beg to express my sincere thanks for the conclusion to which they have come. Dr. Goheen told me that under any circumstances you might have an attack of the fever, and that your good constitution might enable you to return home, but it would be under very distressing circumstances, as you would in all probability be disabled for life from active service. . . .

One or two letters addressed to you while in Europe have been returned to me. One I handed to Brother Lane; the other I hold, waiting your instructions. It is postmarked "Lebanon, Sept. 26."

With our united regards to you, Mrs. Soule, and family, I remain

Yours very truly, FRANCIS HALL.

Thus it appears that his known feebleness and the contrary advice of Dr. Goheen, the Board's medical missionary in Liberia, alone prevented Bishop Soule from going, in 1843, to the African shores. This history throws a light of much significance upon the paragraph in the Episcopal Address of 1840 which refers to the African Mission. That paragraph, as the entire Address beside, came from the pen and heart of Joshua Soule. It read:

To Africa we look with the deepest solicitude. Our sympathies, prayers, and efforts mingle on her coasts. In our missionary enterprise commenced at Liberia we aim at the conversion of a continent to God. The handful of precious seed which has been sown in that infant colony and watered by the tears and prayers of the missionaries and the Church

shall spring up and ripen, to be sown again with a hundredfold increase, till Africa shall become one fruitful field, cultivated in righteousness. Although a number of faithful and devoted missionaries have fallen in that field of labor, we should by no means be discouraged in the prosecution of so great a work. They have fallen asleep, but they sleep in the Lord. And being dead, they still speak; and the voice from their tombs is a call to the Church of Christ on the American Continent to emulate their holy zeal and fill up the ranks from which they have been removed.

Since Melville B. Cox, the Virginian, in 1832 gave himself to Africa, too soon to sanctify its soil with his dust, the eye and thought of the New Englander had not ceased to turn that way. Had he been permitted by the Mission Board to carry out his wish, he would have been absent from the General Conference of 1844. What had been the consequences of that absence?

By the death of Bishop Roberts, which event occurred early in 1843, Soule became the Senior Bishop of the Church, and there devolved upon him the duty of providing for the Conference presidencies thus made vacant. In May he dispatched a letter to Bishop Andrew assigning several of the same to him. The remainder he took himself or apportioned them amongst himself and his other three colleagues. In November he was at the Mississippi Conference, as also at other Southern and some Western sittings; but as the Minutes of those years do not give the same clew to the Conference presidencies as do the modern journals, I am unable to trace his itinerary with certainty. Except for periodical attacks of asthma, his health continued good, and his old-time record for hard work was maintained.

With the round of the autumn and spring Conferences finished, the General Conference of 1844 was in sight. Although he had taken full account of the drift of Northern and Eastern public opinion since his return from Europe, Soule did not seem to apprehend the possibility of a cataclysm as the result of the debates admittedly certain to be joined at the coming session. But he was warned by his colleague, Bishop Andrew, to be prepared for the worst. "The state of the Church," wrote Andrew, "afflicts me. The abolition excitement, I fear, has never presented an aspect so threatening to the union of the Church as it does at this moment. . . . I look forward to the next General Conference with no little apprehension." But wise, diffident, and unobtrusive as was this prophet, he little dreamed that *he,* of all men, should be the occasion and center of a contention whose effect would be—to use the mathematical language of Dr. Buckley—to leave to Methodism "a bisected Church." The forces soon to clash cannot better be described than by the use of the misallied categoricals, the "irresistible" and the "immovable." The determinative in the issue was not a matter primarily of religious conviction, nor predominantly of ethical ideals. Whatever there was of these, it existed largely as differences of interpretation. At last the issue was ethnic and social. So long as these latter sentiments were left out of the contest there was hope of an ultimate solution through the Church's catechetical and administrative channels. Time alone would have brought the conviction and mutual understanding necessary to quietly abolish slavery as had been done by other civilized peoples. But when the po-

litical and race aspects of the controversy came into view and were accepted as a major content of the question, a settlement was hopeless. To that extent the events of 1844 were the offspring of fate or fortuity.

The General Conference of 1844 met in Greene Street Church, New York, on May 1, and adjourned about the hour of 1 A.M. June 11, having been in session somewhat more than forty days. In ability, experience, and skill in parliamentary matters the body was as marked as the questions it was called upon to handle were important. The leaders on both sides were, or had been, conservatives. A feeling of foreboding, however, possessed the body from its opening session.

A number of memorials on the subject of slavery were before the Conference during the first week of its sitting. These were referred to a committee instructed to report directly and without delay on the points made by the memorialists. However, before this committee could act the subject of slavery was brought before the Conference in a concrete form. The Rev. F. A. Harding, of the Baltimore Conference, who had become connected by marriage with slavery, had failed to manumit the slaves, and for this reason had been by the Annual Conference suspended from the functions of the ministerial office. Exercising the right of appeal, he caused his case to be laid before the General Conference and asked for a reversal of the decision of the lower court. His plea for annulment of judgment was based mainly on the ground of the rule of 1816 which required of members and ministers that they manumit their slaves in States where the statutes permitted such

manumission and allowed the ex-slave to enjoy his freedom. The State of Maryland did not permit manumission. It was further pleaded that the slaves would not, or had not, consented to removal to Liberia or to the territory of a nonslave State of the Union. The discussion of this case extended over four days; and when the vote was finally taken, the decision of the Baltimore Conference was sustained: Mr. Harding was left suspended.

The effect produced upon the public mind of the Church by the reports sent out covering the debates and proceedings in the Harding case was exciting in the extreme. In the South the news brought distress and increased foreboding; in the North and East it was generally received with exultation. But there were many men of the North in the Conference who saw the peril ahead and joined their Southern colleagues in a movement to avert the same. The ordinary business and legislation of the session were almost wholly neglected, the supreme wish being to save the ship. On the fifteenth day of the sitting Dr. Capers and Dr. Olin joined in a call for a committee to confer with the bishops as to the possibility of adopting a plan "for the permanent pacification of the Church." Dr. Olin, though supporting this call, saw little hope for pacification. He did "not see how Northern men could yield their ground or Southern men give up theirs." The "irresistible" and the "immovable" were in contact. The law of the Church on slavery was no longer accepted as a reason by the majority, and the minority would never tolerate a violation of it. The law represented the convictions of the minority, but it no longer repre-

sented the sentiments of the majority. After a season of fasting and prayer and after much deliberation, the committee on May 18 reported that no plan of compromise or agreement could be devised. The ship was driving, and the elements were growing more threatening on both bows.

Two days later, on the 20th, the beginning of the end was entered upon. Bishop Andrew, through circumstances too well known to every intelligent Methodist reader to need rehearsing here, had become connected with slavery. The case bore the exact features of that of Mr. Harding. Moreover, the laws of Georgia were practically the same as those of Maryland. Under the circumstances Bishop Andrew considered the slaves in his care as part of his household; and since to manumit them was to send them into exile, to which they would not consent, he could but leave them to his wife as a matter of mercy and human kindness.

Under a motion made by Mr. Collins and sustained by a majority vote of the Conference, the Committee on Episcopacy was instructed to inquire into the facts of Bishop Andrew's relations to slavery. The committee reported back to the Conference on May 21, submitting a statement from Bishop Andrew, in substance as given above. There was no plea accompanying this statement. He was a bishop in the Church, but the law of the Church protected alike the general superintendent and the humblest member. He stood silently on that law, by means of which the connection had been held together from the beginning. There was no charge brought or even insinuated against him; his character was spotless. Dr. Stephen Olin, a most capa-

ble judge, said on the Conference floor: "If there ever was a man worthy to fill the episcopal office by his disinterestedness, his love of the Church, his ardent, melting sympathy for all the interests of humanity, but, above all, by his unreserved and uncompromising advocacy of the interests of the slaves—if these are the qualifications for the office of a bishop, then James O. Andrew is preëminently fitted to hold the office. I know no man who has been so bold an advocate of the interests of the slaves; and when I have been constrained to refrain from saying what perhaps I should have said (to the owners of slaves), I have heard him at camp meetings and on other public occasions call fearlessly on masters to see to the temporal and spiritual interests of their slaves as a high Christian duty."

On May 22 Alfred Griffith introduced a resolution calling on Bishop Andrew to resign his office. In the absence of a charge, Mr. Griffith advanced the doctrine that a bishop is simply an officer of the General Conference, and that the Conference can demand his resignation without assigning a reason therefor. That theory became popular during subsequent debates, and was strongly supported by Dr. (afterwards Bishop) Hamline and others. With Griffith it was a survival and development from the radicalism engendered by the debates on the "suspended resolutions" in the General Conferences of 1820 and 1824. Quite vividly were the scenes of those early days recalled when, at the close of Mr. Griffith's speech and amid a profound sensation in the Conference room, Bishop Soule arose and, claiming the right to address the body, uttered these characteristic words: "I rise, sir, seeing no

other speaker on the floor, and, I assure you and the Conference, strange as it may seem, with as perfect calmness of spirit as I ever remember to have possessed at any period of my life. I cannot and I need not conceal from you, sir, or from this General Conference that since the commencement of this session I have been the subject of deep mental distress and agony. But in this respect the season of my bitterness has passed away. Conscious that I have pursued, with close thought and prayer, such a course as was within my power to harmonize the brethren and to strengthen, if possible, the peace and unity of this body and of the whole Church, I have calmly submitted the whole matter to the overruling and superintending providence of Almighty God. I stand connected with this subject individually, and in connection with my colleagues, in a truly peculiar way; but I have at this period no personal interest whatever in the matter. I am, I assure you, willing, entirely willing, so far as I am myself concerned, to be immolated; but I can be immolated on only one altar, and that is the altar of the union of the Methodist Episcopal Church. You cannot, all the powers of earth cannot, immolate me upon a Northern altar or a Southern altar. Here I take my stand, my position. But I did not rise, with the indulgence of this body, this morning even to touch the merits of the question now before this body. It would ill become me in the relation I sustain to this body and to the Methodist Episcopal Church to do it. But I have risen to suggest to the Conference some considerations which I hope may have their influence upon the mode of conducting this weighty concern. I

speak to men of God, to men of experience, to men who have analyzed the elements of human nature and of ecclesiastical and civil polity, to men of thought, who have been accustomed to trace causes and their effects through all the diversified forms of human society. I speak to Christian men and Christian ministers; I speak to young men who have not had the same time as the aged nor the same opportunities from experience and observation to grasp fully these great and interesting subjects. I trust I shall hear on the floor of this Conference the voice of age and of experience; and I beseech you, brethren, by the deepest interests that can affect our beloved Zion—I beseech you by a voice from the tomb of a Wesley and a beloved Asbury, and from the sleeping places of our venerated fathers, to let your spirits on this occasion be perfectly calm and self-possessed and perfectly deliberate. I advise, in the place in which I stand, that the younger men hear the voice of age. I beg you, brethren, to remember that you stand at this moment before several tribunals. You are before (I speak to the General Conference) a tribunal in the galleries; and whatever view you may take of this subject, if they cannot judge of the merits of the case before you, such are their enlightened ideas of what belongs to the spirit of Christianity and the office of Christian ministers that they will sit in judgment on you. I would also observe here that, as a great branch of the Protestant Christian community, our position in regard to this subject is unique and distinguished from all other branches of that community. So far as I know, there is not a single sister (Protestant) Church in these United States or in the world having any legis-

lation on the subject of slavery. I say in this we are unique, we are alone. We therefore stand in our action on this subject before the tribunal of all the Christian Churches of our own land, and our actions will certainly be judged of by that tribunal. We act here also in the capacity of a General Conference, and everything we do here is to go out before the whole body of ministers and people whom we here represent; it is to go out in the face of the whole Church, and they will judge with respect to our action in the premises. We are, too, before the tribunal of public opinion, and statesmen, civilians, and jurists have an interest in this matter; and they will judge us on other grounds and in reference to our standards and rules of action, and not as we shall be judged by the great mass. They will judge by the rules of the 'book,' according as our action is founded on facts and is in accordance with the rules of that book which contains the constitution and laws of the Church."

Following the address of Bishop Soule, a number of speeches were made on the Griffith motion, which proposed to secure Bishop Andrew's resignation from office not on legal grounds, but on those of expediency. These speeches came from both sides, from Southern and Northern men in about equal numbers. At the close of the debate on the Griffith motion, the radicals practically admitted defeat in the argument by abandoning the demand for the Bishop's resignation and asking in a substitute offered by Finley that he "desist from the exercise of this [the episcopal] office so long as this impediment [of slavery] remains."

Bishop Andrew would no doubt have resigned ex-

cept for the unanimous protest of the Southern delegates, who felt that such a course would "jeopardize the unity of the Church." From no point of view did they see a promise of help in the removal or retirement of Bishop Andrew from office. Nor was agreement possible with the case left *in status quo.* Vainly the moderates hoped to achieve a victory that would divide itself—half to the one, half to the other. The majority was only logical, if still unjust.

The effect of the original resolution and the substitute was the same—namely, to deprive Bishop Andrew of his office without form of trial. Upon the submission of the substitute followed a debate which for brilliancy and forensic circumstance, it is believed, has never been surpassed, even in the Senate of the United States. Particularly noteworthy were the contributions made to it by George F. Pierce and Jesse T. Peck, both young men and both afterwards called to the episcopacy. Near the end of this series of brilliant orations (for they were that rather than convincing arguments) and at what his venerable judgment considered the psychological moment, Bishop Soule again intervened with an utterance which, to my mind, is so masterful a résumé of the points and relations of ethics and jurisprudence involved that it may be compared with the constitutional papers of our greatest statesmen. The Bishop said in part: "I desire that no undue influence may be produced from the peculiar relation in which I stand to the Church. Sympathy may exert too great an influence when it is brought to bear on great principles. The only subject which has awakened my sympathies during this whole discussion is

the condition of my suffering brethren of the colored race, and this never fails to do it. No matter where I meet the man of color, whether in the South or in the North, with the amount of liberty he enjoys, the sympathies of my nature are all awakened for him. Could I restore bleeding Africa to freedom, to independence, to the rights—to all the rights—of man, I would most gladly do it. But this I cannot do, you cannot do. And if I cannot burst the bonds of the colored man, I will not strengthen them. If I cannot extend to him all the good I would, I will never shut him out from the benefits which I have it in my power to bestow. . . .

I wish to say explicitly that if the superintendents are to be regarded only as the officers of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and consequently, as officers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, liable to be deposed at will by a simple majority of this body, without a form of trial, no obligation existing growing out of the constitution and laws of the Church, even to assign cause wherefore—I say, if this doctrine be a correct one, everything I have to say hereafter is powerless and falls to the ground. But brethren will permit me to say, strange as it may seem, although I have had the honor and the privilege to be a member of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church ever since its present organization, though I was honored with a seat in the convention of ministers which organized it, in this respect I have heard for the first time, either on the floor of this Conference, in an Annual Conference, or through the whole of the private membership, this doctrine advanced; this is the first time I ever heard it. Of course

it struck me as a novelty. I am not going to enter the arena of controversy with this Conference. I desire that my position may be defined. I desire to understand my landmarks as a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, not the bishop of the General Conference, not the bishop of any Annual Conference. . . . Well, brethren, I had conceived, I had understood from the beginning that special provision was made for the trial of a bishop. The constitution has provided that no preacher, no person was to be deprived of the right of trial, according to the forms of Discipline, and of the right of appeal; but, sir, if I understand the doctrine advanced and vindicated, it is that you may depose a bishop without the form of trial; you may depose him without any obligation to show cause, and therefore he is the only minister in your Church who has no appeal. It seems to me that the Church has made special provision for the trial of the bishop, for the special reason that the bishop has no appeal. Well, now, sir, I make these observations, as I said, only to the ear of reason. You will remember that this whole thing is going out before the world as well as the Church. I wish to know my landmarks, to find out where I stand; for, indeed, I do not hesitate to say to you that if my standing and the relation in which I have been placed to the Methodist Episcopal Church under my solemn vows of ordination, if my relation is to stand on the voice of a simple majority of this body, without a form of trial and without an obligation even to show me cause why I am deposed, I have some doubt whether there is the man on this floor that would be willing to stand in my place. Now, brethren will at

once perceive the peculiar situation in which I am placed. Here are my brethren from the Ohio and other Conferences. We have been together in great harmony and peace. There has been great union of spirit everywhere, but I said at the beginning there were periods in the history of every man occupying any important relation or station in society when his individual character and influence could not be neutralized by the laws of association. You must unmoor me from my anchorage on the basis of this book; you must unsettle me from my principles, my settled and fixed principles. From these I cannot be shaken by any influences on my right hand or on my left hand; neither the zeal of youth nor the experience of hoary age shall move me from my principles. Convince me that I am wrong, and I yield. . . . The adoption of that resolution deposes Bishop Andrew, without form of trial; such is my deliberate opinion. I do not believe it is safe for our community; I do not believe it is safe for you; and I am out of this question. What shall be done? The question, I know, wakes up the attention of every brother. Can it be possible that the Methodist Episcopal Church is in such a state of excitement—in such a state, I had almost said, of revolution—as to be unprepared to send out the plain, simple facts in the case to the Churches, to the Annual Conferences, everywhere through our community, and waive all action on this subject till another General Conference? . . . And now, in taking leave, I offer devout prayer to Almighty God that you may be directed wisely in the decision you are about to make. I have given to you what, in my sober and deliberate judgment, is the best and safest course

which you can pursue—safest for all concerned. I want that opinion to have no more influence upon you than it justly deserves in the Conferences, all the Conferences. I thank the Conference for the attention they have been pleased to give me. I thank the audience for their attention. I very well know, I am not at all unapprised, that the position I occupy, in which I stand on the principles of that resolution—on the principles involved in it—may seal my fate. I say I am not all unapprised of that. Let me go; but I pray you, hold to principles—to principles. And with these remarks I submit the whole to your and God's direction. Amen."

The exciting and disturbing debate held through several days. "So far from developing any plan of pacification," says Dr. Gross Alexander in his interesting study of the proceedings of this Conference, "the debate developed decided differences of view between the Northern and Southern delegates concerning fundamental questions of Church polity and law, in particular concerning the constitutional powers of the General Conference and the tenure of office of the bishops, or, more broadly, the relation of the episcopal office to the government of Episcopal Methodism."

It seemed for a time that the substitute was destined to meet the same fate as the original motion—that it was never to be put to a vote. The previous question was called, but the call was not sustained. At this juncture Bishop Hedding came forward and proposed that a conference be held between the bishops and the committee of Northern and Southern delegates. The suggestion was hailed with hope. The bishops were giv-

en, by consent, powers plenipotentiary. On May 31 they reported the results of their conference. They recommended a suspension of all action in Bishop Andrew's case until the General Conference of 1848 and the employment of Bishop Andrew in the meantime only "in those sections of the Church in which his presence and services would be welcome and cordial."

Before any action could be taken on this recommendation, Bishop Hedding withdrew his name, because, as it has since been affirmed, the New England contingent threatened to secede from the connection should Bishop Andrew be left in the bishopric. Bishops Waugh and Morris desired their names to remain. Bishop Soule wished the document, with his name attached to it, "to go forth through a thousand channels to the world." Another futile effort or two being made to adopt the Bishops' report as a compromise, the previous question was called "amid profound silence" and carried by a vote of 111 to 69. Bishop Andrew had been requested to suspend himself from the office of bishop.

A motion to construe the action as advisory and not mandatory was sent to the table. Excitement rose steadily; and it having appeared to the Southern delegates that the limit of passivity had been reached, but inspired by a purpose to lay a sure foundation for their feet, they met and formulated a protest against the action of the majority as subversive of the law of the Church and contrary to the letter and spirit of justice. This document was written by Dr. H. B. Bascom, and is noteworthy in a record filled with noteworthy utterances. It may in some true and proper sense be re-

garded as the history-granted charter of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and, as its writer and sponsors believed, a restoration in spirit and letter of the original *Methodist Episcopal Church in America,* a title which ceased to have legal significance in 1796.

On June 5 the Southern delegates submitted a declaration to the effect that the continued agitation of the subject of slavery and abolition and the extra judicial proceedings in the case of Bishop Andrew "must produce a state of things in the South which renders a continuance of the jurisdiction of this General Conference over these Conferences inconsistent with the success of the ministry in the slave-holding States." This was meant to discover the state of mind in the Northern wing of the Conference. Had those brethren found it desirable to see the Church divided rather than agree to a compromise?

Dr. Elliott moved the reference of the "declaration" to a committee which should, failing to find any other solution, report, "if possible, a constitutional plan for a mutual and friendly division of the Church." In due time this committee reported the historic "Plan of Separation," the constitutionality of which was subsequently fully established by the civil courts. For the text of it the reader is referred to some general Church history. It provided for the division of the Church on territorial lines, and also for distribution of the money and assets of the Book Concern and the Chartered Fund on the basis of Church and ministerial membership.

The Plan of Separation, when submitted to the Conference, was adopted by a majority ranging from 135

to 153 on the several resolutions, against 18 to 13 voting in the negative. Before the adjournment of the Conference, which occurred two days later, Bishop Soule for himself and his colleagues asked instructions from the Conference as to whether Bishop Andrew's name should appear in the official books of the Church as a bishop, if he should receive a bishop's stipend, and what work, if any, should be assigned him. The Conference instructed that his name should stand in the official publications, and that he should receive a bishop's allowance. On the last point the response was ambiguous, but seemed to put the responsibility on Bishop Andrew. Thus closed the memorable General Conference of 1844. There were aching hearts in the bosoms of thousands, but none ached as did that great heart in the bosom of the Senior Bishop of Methodism. *He stood now where two seas met.* He was in heaviness, but not for himself. He knew what he should do—follow the one star which had led him through his changeful years: loyalty to conviction and duty. "Duty had a charm for him that no suffering could obscure." He saw that he must soon choose his course—it was already chosen. But it was not to be the South against the North, nor the South for its own sake. He had chosen Methodism in his youth; it was Methodism, as he interpreted it, that he was now set to follow through all. The late Dr. Summers, in considering this purpose of his, said: "Perhaps no man was ever more thoroughly attached to the Methodist system of doctrine and discipline than Joshua Soule. He loved Methodism because of its grand scriptural character, its aggressive power, and its diffusive spirit. He

loved its simple theology, its sublime psalmody, its decent forms—for which, indeed, he was somewhat of a stickler—and its elevated standards of experimental and practical piety. His own personal religious character was formed upon it. And when he drew near his end, he rejoiced in the belief that it was renewing its youth and going forth afresh, like a strong man to run a race, and bequeathed to the Church his dying testimony in favor of its truth and power. He told us especially and emphatically on his dying bed that he considered the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, as the fairest and fullest exponent of Methodism now in existence."

CHAPTER XIV.

Cavalier and Puritan.

Nobody believed after the close of the General Conference of 1844 in the possibility of the continued unity of American Episcopal Methodism. Not only were the Southern delegates of this opinion, but they felt it a necessity and a duty to anticipate action on the part of that section of the Church which they represented. Accordingly, in a meeting held immediately following the adjournment of the General Conference they prepared an address to their constituencies in which it was suggested that a convention be called to meet in Louisville, Ky., in May, 1845, to be composed of delegates in the ratio of one to each eleven members of the Annual Conferences. The address advised that these delegates be fully instructed upon all the points on which the separate constituencies might elect to have action taken. This done, the Southerners repaired to their homes.

Wounded and smarting under the action of the majority, Bishop Andrew also returned without delay to his home, in Georgia. Strong and masterful man though he was, he was doubtless dazed at the stupendous upheaval of which he was the center, and felt that he must have time and quiet for reflection. These considerations and feelings of delicacy kept him from attending the meeting of the bishops which fell soon after in New York City. The name of Bishop Andrew

did not appear on the published list of episcopal visitations, and the reason for this, as officially given, was that, inasmuch as the General Conference devolved on Bishop Andrew himself the responsibility of deciding what, if any, work he should take, the other superintendents could not without his verbal or written request assign him any labor. Two plans, however, were prepared—one given to the public, and another, called the "reserved plan," which was committed to Bishop Soule for safe and confidential keeping. This "reserved plan" was to replace the published plan only in the event Bishop Andrew should make personal application for work, or signify in writing his willingness to take the assignments. The original of this paper is before me. With the exception of the Indiana Mission District, the Conferences allotted Bishop Andrew were exclusively in the South, which, under the conditions existing, was a perfectly proper arrangement. Indeed, in all the matters dealt with by the bishops at this time there was evidenced the most genuine desire to do justice and serve the Church, which was still a unity so far as its organization and oversight were concerned. If this spirit had been maintained by all, the decision for division, when it did come, would, in the language of Bishop Morris, have "disturbed the Church no more than would the creation of a new Annual Conference." There were not wanting on both sides those who at one time hoped that a common episcopacy might serve both divisions of Methodism. How futile that hope was is now only too well known.

The defective point in the scheme for a reserved plan of visitation was that Bishop Andrew was not official-

ly notified of it; and although through a close intimacy with Bishop Soule he learned the facts, he could not accept the information as warranting a formal communication. He had been put by both the General Conference and the bishops in the attitude of a respondent, and could act worthily and creditably only on their initiative. Against the exclusion of Bishop Andrew from the published list of visitations Bishop Soule entered a strong protest. Bishop Morris was also disinclined to allow the justness of the act, but yielded because of the action taken by the General Conference.

Bishop Andrew did not—he could not—apply for work. He was entitled to it on the basis of his episcopacy; but it must be allowed that the majority of his colleagues felt a conscientious constraint in view of the aforesaid action of the General Conference, though several of them believed that action unwarranted. With the courage and frankness characteristic of him in all things, Bishop Soule invited Bishop Andrew to join him at the sittings of those Conferences over which he had been named to preside. This invitation Bishop Andrew so far accepted as to meet his venerable colleague at the Kentucky Conference in September. After the session of that body, however, he turned eastward.

The Kentucky Conference, being the first of the Southern sittings for the year, indorsed the call for the proposed Convention at Louisville and elected its quota of delegates. Thus was the first note of formal separation sounded. That it would close in a diapason of the Conferences South, no man questioned, least of all

the wise and far-seeing senior superintendent. I find in the fragmentary remains of Bishop Soule's papers one written in his own hand which belongs to this date. It is addressed, "My Dear Brother," but there is no clew to the identity of the addressed. I am, however, led to think that the contents were meant for either Bishop Morris or Bishop Hedding. The document is of such importance as expounding the Bishop's attitude at this time that I quote two of its more pertinent sections:

In my last letter I freely expressed the opinion that the division of the Church would be the inevitable result of the action of the late General Conference and offered some grounds on which that opinion was founded. But while I entertain this sentiment as the honest and, I think, the unprejudiced conviction of my mind, and as such express it, I do it at the same time with a sorrow and heaviness of spirit too deep and painful to be described. And if the last act of my official life could effect such a permanent adjustment of the controversy as would preserve the union of the body on a firm foundation, I should believe that I had lived to valuable purposes, if no other act of my life had contributed to the promotion of the prosperity of the Church of Christ, the best interests of my country, or the happiness of my fellow-men. But I cannot even hope for such an auspicious close of my pilgrimage. . . . Can it be true in fact that the constitution and disciplinary rules of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which are designed as the bulwarks and safeguards of the right and privileges of every grade of ministers and members in her communion and to define and limit the powers of every judicature and prescribe the duties and prerogatives of every office known in her economy, are so vague and indefinite as to afford a valid ground for such conflicting opinions? Are the lines of demarcation between the legislative, executive, and judicial departments of the Church yet to be settled? Is it

yet to be determined whether the eldership of the Church is equal in its rights? or whether the episcopacy is a mere agency of the General Conference or a distinct department in the government? Whether a bishop of the Church may be suspended from the exercise of the functions of his office without any form of trial or any charge of improper conduct of any kind or any delinquency of official duties?

That Bishop Soule had an affinity—the far-off affinity of blood and race traditions—for the people and ideals of the South is not to be questioned. The atavism so powerfully manifested in his character made him a Southerner by natural selection. Slavery was never to be considered a part of these ideals. Slavery was the accident as it was the misfortune of the South. At first slavery was common to New England and the South. New England was indeed the "black-birder" of the nation, introducing and promoting the trade in the beginning; but the barren crofts of the Puritans made slavery unremunerative. The cotton plant and its fertile savannas made the South a slave country. The early ideals of the South were those conservative doctrines of the social order, that amenability to law and traditional authority and respect for the worth of the individual that completely described the creed of Joshua Soule on the intellectual side. He was opposed to slavery as such, was never the owner of a slave, nor can it be shown that he ever sought by word or deed to abet the institution. He only accepted in the Church the view that Washington, Jefferson, and others had held in the State. It was a problem to be worked out in sanity and patience. That the Gordian knot was at last cut with the bloody sword of fratri-

cidal strife is not evidence that the doctrine of Washington, Jefferson, Asbury, and Soule in the two realms, temporal and spiritual, could not have brought a happier result under conditions of peace.

But it was not his natural affinity in these things that caused Soule to cast his lot with the South. The large determinative was the fact that, as he saw it, the Asburian ark, with the scroll of the law and the staff that budded, went with the minority rather than with the majority. No historian dealing with the period of American Methodism from 1784 to 1844 can escape the fact that the spirit of Episcopal Methodism—the defense and interpretation of its legal life—was embodied in three men—Francis Asbury, William McKendree, and Joshua Soule. Nor can it be easily doubted that each of these men would have behaved himself similarly in the other's place. Each stood absolutely on the "book of the law." "Twice in my life," said Bishop Soule in after years, "have I been brought to a stand. Twice have my faith and resolution been put to the test; but I decided in both cases in the fear of God, and with reference to my accountability at his bar."

As the autumn of 1844 passed and the winter came on, Conference after Conference of the Southern circuit elected delegates to the proposed Convention, all expressing the hope that some plan for continued unity might be found, but all instructing for separation as a final measure. The Alabama Conference, which met in March, 1845, was the last of the number and completed the unanimity of the call. It was now May 1, 1845. The delegates had assembled at Louisville, and "Finis" was being appended to the chapter on separation.

The scope of this work does not lay upon me the necessity of tracing the course of action taken at this Convention. Our Church histories, and especially the admirable work of Dr. Redford, to which reference has already been made, may be consulted for the details of the destiny-making session. But fidelity to my subject requires that I treat briefly of the status and powers of this Convention, as the view I get of them comports with the interpretation of separation as given by the august man whose memoir I am now writing. The Louisville Convention was not endowed with plenary powers, as some have held. It was not a Conference nor an ecclesiastical synod in any proper sense. It was no more than a commission of the General Conference, appointed through an unusual but constitutional process to carry out the details of an act of the said Conference—namely, "The Plan of Separation." This plan, when indorsed by the Annual Conferences interested, became the authorization and charter of the Convention, which had power to *divide* the Church—*no more*. It could not alter one canon, statute, or letter of the book of Discipline other than was necessary to divide the connection into two General Conferences. The Church remained the same; the Discipline remained unchanged. Had the Convention gone beyond this and altered one rule or law of the Discipline, the charge that *a new* Church had been created, that a secession had been accomplished, could have been made to stand. Nothing of the sort was, however, done. The name of the Church was not changed, only for the expositive "in the United States of America" (which itself was an emendation) was substituted the suffix

"South." The ratio of representation from the Annual Conferences was changed, as was also the time for the meeting of the General Conference of the Southern body. These two items are indeed in the constitution, but are nonessentials and *movable signs*. For the rest a committee was appointed to verbally conform the Discipline to the new order, and the work of the Convention was finished, leaving the Church and the Discipline where it found them.

The Southern Conferences by vote invited the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America to attend the sessions of the Louisville Convention. This meant all the bishops—Soule, Hedding, Waugh, Morris, Andrew, Hamline, and Janes, the two latter having been elected by the General Conference of the year before. Bishops Soule, Morris, and Andrew accepted the invitation and were present at the opening session. By resolution of the Convention, the three bishops were requested to preside over its deliberations and under such arrangements as they might make from day to day. Bishop Morris declined to share the presidency, but Bishop Soule for himself and Bishop Andrew accepted the invitation in the following words: "The opinion which I formed at the close of the late General Conference, that the proceedings of that body would result in a division of the Church, was not induced by the impulse of excitement, but was predicated of principles and facts after the most deliberate and mature consideration. That opinion I have freely expressed. And however deeply I have regretted such a result, believing it to be inevitable, my efforts have been made not to prevent it, but rather

that it might be attended with the least injury and the greatest amount of good which the case would admit. I am not alone in this opinion. A number of aged and influential ministers entertained the same views. And, indeed, it is not easy to conceive how any one intimately acquainted with the facts in the case and the relative position of the North and South could arrive at any other conclusion. Nothing has transpired since the close of the General Conference to change the opinion I then formed, but subsequent events have rather confirmed it. In view of the certainty of the issue and at the same time ardently desirous that the two great divisions of the Church might be in peace and harmony within their own respective bounds and cultivate the spirit of Christian fellowship, brotherly kindness, and charity for each other, I cannot but consider it an auspicious event that sixteen Annual Conferences, represented in this Convention, have acted with such extraordinary unanimity in the measures they have taken in the premises. In the Southern Conferences which I have attended I do not recollect that there has been a dissenting voice with respect to the necessity of a separate organization; and although their official acts in deciding the important question have been marked with that clearness and decision which should afford satisfactory evidence that they have acted under a solemn conviction of duty to Christ and to the people of their charge, they have been equally distinguished by moderation and candor. And as far as I have been informed, all the other Conferences have pursued a similar course. . . . While you are thus impressed with the importance and solemnity of the subject which

has occasioned the Convention, and of the high responsibility under which you act, I am confident you will cultivate the spirit of Christian moderation and forbearance, and that in all your acts you will keep strictly within the limits and provisions of the Plan of Separation adopted by the General Conference with great unanimity and apparent Christian kindness. I can have no doubt of the firm adherence of the ministers and members of the Church in the Conferences you represent to the doctrines, rules, order of government, and forms of worship contained in our excellent book of Discipline. For myself I stand upon the basis of Methodism as contained in this book, and from it I intend never to be removed. I cannot be insensible to the expression of your confidence in the resolution you have unanimously adopted, requesting me to preside over the Convention in conjunction with my colleagues. And after having weighed the subject with careful deliberation, I have resolved to accept your invitation and discharge the duties of the important trust to the best of my ability. My excellent colleague, Bishop Andrew, is of the same mind, and will cordially participate in the duties of the chair. . . . I am requested to state to the Convention that our worthy and excellent colleague, Bishop Morris, believes it to be his duty to decline a participation in the presidential duties. He assigns such reasons for so doing as are, in the judgment of his colleagues, perfectly satisfactory; and it is presumed they would be considered in the same light by the Convention. In conclusion, I trust that all things will be done in that spirit which will be approved of God, and devoutly pray that your acts may

result in the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom and the salvation of the souls of men."

After delivering these words, Bishop Soule took the chair and alternately with Bishop Andrew presided over the succeeding sessions. On May 19 the Convention passed the following resolution—viz.:

> *Resolved,* That Bishops Soule and Andrew be, and they are hereby, respectively and cordially requested by this convention to unite with, and become regular and constitutional bishops of, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, upon the basis of the Plan of Separation adopted by the late General Conference.

To this resolution Bishop Soule submitted on the same day the following answer:

> *Dear Brethren:* I feel myself bound in good faith to carry out the official plan of Episcopal Visitations as settled by the bishops in New York and published in the official papers of the Church until the session of the first General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, from which time it would be necessary that the plan should be so changed as to be accommodated to the jurisdiction of the two distinct General Conferences. That when such Southern General Conference shall be held I shall feel myself fully authorized by the Plan of Separation, adopted by the General Conference of 1844, to unite myself with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and if received by the General Conference of said Church to exercise the functions of the episcopal office within the jurisdiction of said General Conference.
>
> JOSHUA SOULE.

Following the adjournment of the Louisville Convention Bishop Soule became the object of many bitter attacks in the press, both secular and religious, in cer-

tain sections of the country. The time has passed when there could be any point, as there was never any satisfaction, in either parading or condemning these acerbities. The fact is mentioned only because it is a link in this history. For the same reason I mention, but forbear to enter into any detail concerning, the fact that certain Annual Conferences officially criticised the venerable Bishop. Other matters which might be adverted to here will come out in the early development of this narrative.

As the biographer of Bishop Soule there have fallen to me through a succession of hands, beginning with those of Bishops Paine and McTyeire, but all of which are now folded in sleep, certain autograph letters written by Bishops Morris, Waugh, and Hedding which have never been published. They contain facts bearing on the events of this period of Bishop Soule's life that the present and all future generations of American Methodists should know. Several of these documents are nearing the point of evanishment through fading and age, and for this reason, as for others, I have decided to print them in full as a part of this volume, only connecting them by such slight comments as will make their contents intelligible to the general reader. The first of these letters will show how cordially at least two of the bishops of the Church in the North regarded Bishop Soule's contention that he was in official relation to the whole Church until a competent body—the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South—should meet, pass his character, and put him in relation under the new order.

NEW YORK, May 27, 1845.

Bishop Soule—Dear Brother: In the emergency which has arisen in the affairs of our beloved Methodism it appears to us that a meeting of the superintendents is very important, if not indispensable. The earliest practical period should, in our opinion, be fixed on for the meeting; and after an examination of the plan of episcopal visitation, we have agreed to recommend that the bishops shall meet in this city on Wednesday, July 2, 1845, at 8 A.M. If our work had admitted of it, we should have been pleased to meet our colleagues at a point more convenient for them; but as our Conferences are now in a course of meeting in quick succession, it would be impracticable to meet at a more distant point from their location. Hoping that you may find it not too inconvenient to meet at the time and place above specified, we earnestly request that you will favor us with your presence on the occasion,

Yours affectionately, E. HEDDING.

P. S.—Bishop Janes, although not present to sign this letter, concurs in the sentiments expressed.

Bishop Soule did not meet with the bishops in New York, but instead sent a letter in which he expressed his conviction that he was under obligation to meet the Conferences assigned to him until the session of the General Conference in the South. How differently the majority of his colleagues viewed the case is set forth in the following official communication:

NEW YORK, July 4, 1845.

To Rev. Bishop Soule—Dear Bishop: Agreeable to appointment, a majority of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church met in New York July 2, 1845. Your letter of the 7th ultimo directed to Bishop Hedding was presented and read. On the first day of the meeting the question was presented relative to the superintendents going South to preside

in the Conferences represented in the Louisville Convention. On the second day, after much deliberation in view of the resolution of the Louisville Convention in which they declare the jurisdiction hitherto exercised over the Annual Conferences represented in said convention *"entirely dissolved,"* the following was adopted:

"Resolved, That, acting as we do under the authority of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church and amenable to said General Conference, we should not consider ourselves justified in presiding in said Conferences conformably to the plan of visitation agreed upon at the close of the late General Conference and published in the journals of the Church."

The Conferences referred to in the above resolution are those represented in the Louisville Convention, including those in the episcopal district assigned to Bishops Morris and Janes for the present official year. In view of the opinion of their colleagues given in the above resolution, Bishops Morris and Janes immediately stated to the meeting that they should respectfully decline going South to preside at those Conferences.

The meeting took no action relative to your appointments. But, thinking perhaps, in view of the decisions of the meeting as above stated, you might choose to change your field of labor, it was agreed Bishop Morris should be present at the Rock River, Iowa, and Illinois Conferences to preside in them in case you should decline attending them.

The resolution of the meeting relating to the superintendents presiding in the Southern Conferences will be published immediately in connection with the resolution of the Louisville Convention.

The meeting agreed to continue to collect the claims of all the superintendents as heretofore for the present official year, presuming the Southern Conferences would do the same, including the claim of Mrs. Roberts. The meeting instructed us as chairman and secretary to give Bishop Soule this statement of their proceedings. Accept our assurances of esteem and fraternal affection.

E. HEDDING, *Chairman;*
EDMUND S. JANES, *Secretary.*

There being great frankness of thought and confidence between Bishop Soule and Bishop Morris, the former addressed to the latter a letter of judgment concerning the action of the bishops. The letter of Bishop Morris in reply is a model of the speech of courtesy, brotherly frankness, and manly sentiment. Its appearance in print can bring no suggestion of regret concerning the writer to any Methodist, North or South:

CINCINNATI, July 21, 1845.

Rev. Bishop Soule—My Dear Brother: Your letter of the 19th inst. was received this morning. I went to the meeting at New York on a simple notice of it from Bishops Hedding and Waugh, which was received unexpectedly and stated no definite subject for consultation, but which I regarded as a sufficient reason for attending, although I had written to Bishop Janes immediately after the Louisville Convention my purpose of going South this year according to the published plan if there was no change. I give our beloved colleagues full credit as to their belief honestly expressed that such a meeting was necessary. You are right in supposing that Bishop Janes and I were in the minority in passing the published resolution. We have not changed our opinion on the main principle—that is, we do not think that mere conventional action destroys our jurisdiction over the Southern Conferences. Had we been left to our own convictions without any further advice or direction from our colleagues, we should have felt bound by our official responsibility to go forward on our regular divisions of the work South and take consequences, fearful as they might have been. But while we could not record our names in favor of the resolution, we could and did agree to abide the judgment of our colleagues. Our right to go South was disputed by many; and had we gone against the advice of our colleagues, it would have been considered an aggravation of the supposed offense. We thought it prudent

to decline for the sake of order and peace, and hence our notice to the Conferences interested.

In regard to yourself, no one of the bishops present or represented by letter disputed or doubted your legal right or authority to preside in any Conference North, the editorial decisions to the contrary notwithstanding. Yet most of them judged that some different arrangement was expedient, and the reason why it was not effected by a simple change in the usual way was that they who were of opinion that Bishop Janes and I could not be justified in going South were of course of opinion that they could not send you or any other in our place. Still it was supposed that under the circumstances, and especially in view of the destitution of the Conferences South, you would prefer to go there at once. Hence the conditional provision for your Conferences North. Allow me to add that every individual in the board expressed for yourself no feelings but those of respect and kindness. In view of the whole ground, I am well persuaded there is nothing better that can now be done than what you suggest. I therefore cordially agree to your request to attend Rock River, Iowa, and Illinois Conferences for you, that you may be left free to do the work which, under the published plan, would have fallen to me or as much thereof as you may be able to do.

Your views respecting the management of the border work are in perfect accordance with my own. The ground taken in some of the principal *Advocates* that the whole Plan of Separation is a nullity can never be adopted by the majority without the greatest inconsistency. On this subject my own mind was once rather unsettled last winter; but my mature judgment is that there is no power in the Methodist Episcopal Church that can nullify an act of the General Conference in the interim of its sessions except on a constitutional question referred to the Annual Conferences for confirmation or rejection, in which case they may render the act void by withholding its requisite constitutional majority. The bishops when together in New York took action respecting this subject. It is perhaps unfortunate that we did not order it to be pub-

lished. A fear of increasing needless controversy was probably the chief reason, but I am persuaded now more than ever that it would have tended to peace. I do not know whether you have been furnished with a copy or not. If you have not and desire it, I will send you a copy. The action is in the form of two resolutions. The first declares that the order respecting the border work as set forth in the Plan of Separation is of binding obligation in the premises, so far as our administration is concerned, and the second defines what may be regarded as sufficient evidence that a charge or society decides by majority to go North or South—viz., authentic documentary testimony either in the form of minutes of a meeting regularly called for the purpose or a simple request in writing, waiving the names of a majority. It was thought that anything short of this would open a door for imposition on the appointing power and also on societies and charges.

I reached B——* on my return from New York an hour after the final adjournment, but learned they had a quiet and pleasant session. No charge or society in the bounds of the Conference requested any change of relation, and the question of separation was not mooted in Conference or elsewhere. Their decrease was largely over 2,000 members.

Brother William Holman, of Kentucky, has been invited to remove to New Orleans and with consent of the proper authority to take charge of New Orleans District and reside in the city. In a conversation with me before I left Louisville he seemed inclined to go. Brother W. Winans recently wrote to me urging that arrangement, and I think favorably of it, as Brother Holman's very superior pastoral habits render him suitable for the work there. He is also a good presiding elder, but I must refer the whole matter now to yourself. I shall at any time be pleased to correspond with you. With sentiments of high respect and feelings of sincere affection, I am yours in the bonds of a peaceful gospel, whether we labor together or in fields remote from each other.

THO. A. MORRIS.

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*Baltimore.

A second letter from Bishop Morris, written nine days later, is filled with information for this and yet future days of Methodism. Its bearings on present-day questions of federation and comity are important and significant to the last degree. If the spirit of this letter had been carried out—if it could be carried out to-day—a new era would dawn for dissevered Methodism, happily now made more nearly a unity in sentiment than for sixty-six years past:

CINCINNATI, July 30, 1845.

Rev. Bishop Soule—Dear Brother: I called this morning at the Book Room for the first time in a week past, having been some days at Covington, Ky., assisting the brethren in an extra meeting, and consequently did not receive your letter of the 23d inst. till to-day, otherwise it should have been answered sooner.

It is not probable that I shall be able to see you at the Missouri Conference, having to meet the Indiana Conference October 8; but anything that may transpire at the Illinois Conference having any bearing on your Missouri work shall be communicated by letter if I cannot see you. I understand it to be the settled purpose of all our colleagues, as it certainly is mine, to conform our administration strictly to the first and second resolutions of the Plan of Separation as far as practicable. That some very hard cases may arise under the practical operation of these rules, especially as to interior societies and minority members of border societies, is easily foreseen; but as the bishops do not make these cases, neither have they power, so far as I know, to relieve them consistently with the Plan of Separation. It is an item of public news that some two hundred members in St. Louis have expressed their determination to remain in the Methodist Episcopal Church; but whether these form a majority of one charge or are gleaned from several, I am not informed. If the former, the case would seem to be manageable; but if the latter, what could be done? what ought to be done? Again, the German mis-

sions, I have learned informally, would wish to remain in connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church. I mean those of the St. Louis District branching out into the Rock River, Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri Conferences, while those at New Orleans and Mobile would prefer the M. E. Church, South.

Brother Nast called on me for information as to their case, and I ventured to express the impression that, while the German missions of New Orleans and Mobile would necessarily fall under the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, those in the St. Louis District might go altogether with whichever side they preferred, according to Resolution 1; for though some of the country missions either side might not be strictly on the border, they were under regulations different from other societies as to Conference lines, and it might operate injuriously to their welfare to separate them, there being only one district of the whole. What do you think of this view of the case?

During our meeting in New York Brothers Lane and Tippett submitted to us a question as to their authority to pay the dividends of the Book Concern to the Southern Conferences. A majority of the bishops thought it inexpedient to express any official opinion in the premises, lest it might be used hereafter in case of possible litigation. I ascertained, however, that Bishops Hedding, Waugh, Janes, and Hamline all believed as I do that the dividends should be paid as heretofore. The Book Agents both at New York and Cincinnati are anxious that they should be paid, both as a matter of equity and of policy. Yet fears were entertained that the Book Committee at New York would order otherwise. Whether the question is settled or not, I am not informed. So far as I recollect, nothing was said as to the family support of the bishops either in our meeting for consultation or by the Book Agents. If definite information is received in time to act on your request where I preside, it shall be attended to.

I send you a copy of the two resolutions respecting the border work. It was concluded by the bishops that, as they were intended to harmonize our own administration and were

adverse to the opinions so confidently expressed by the leading Northern *Advocates,* it would occasion less excitement and difficulty to let them be made known in the regular course of administration than to publish them in the papers. This, I am fully persuaded, was an innocent mistake. They should have accompanied the published resolution. It would have been better for all concerned. I wrote last week to Bishop Janes, our Secretary, requesting him if he concurred with me to obtain, if practicable, the consent of our colleagues by letter to publish them, with what success is yet unknown. In the meantime I think it entirely proper that Bishop Andrew should have a copy for his own use. I would not wish to be the occasion of making them public without the consent of my colleagues. These, I believe, are all the points adverted to in your letter, and I will add only one or two remarks.

The violence of spirit indulged in by some of the editors and their correspondents toward yourself and the Southern brethren since the Louisville Convention is reacting against their own views and measures, as might have been expected, and subdivision is likely after all to taper off to a comparatively narrow point. So much the better for all concerned.

As separation is now inevitable, my chief concern is that our worse than needless controversy should be speedily terminated, that the Church funds should be fairly divided without litigation, that terms of friendly recognition and mutual transfers of preachers and members should be agreed upon, and that we may live, love, and labor as brethren in the vineyard of our common Maker.

Yours sincerely, THO. A. MORRIS.

The last of this series of communications is cumulative of the spirit of fraternity, frankness, and constitutional action, dominant at this time in the administration; for let it still be understood that the Southern jurisdiction did not begin until nearly a year later—namely, with the General Conference which met at Petersburg, Va., in May, 1846.

St. Louis, September 29, 1845.

Rev. Bishop Soule—Dear Brother: Having learned of the Book Agents that the dividends would be paid to the Conferences South, I presented the Bishops' claims according to the old estimate, including those of Bishop Andrew and yourself, which were cheerfully paid by the Rock River and Iowa Conferences. At Illinois they demurred, laid the subject over, discussed it, and finally refused to pay the claims of yourself and Bishop Andrew by a large majority. Subsequently I presented the claims of the other bishops, according to the new estimate, which were paid. I regretted such a state of things, but could not control it.

The German missions in Missouri all applied, and I think by a unanimous vote of the members, to be recognized at the Illinois Conference, as did all the missionaries connected with them, and were accordingly attached to said Conference. To this measure there was some opposition from such men as wished the German missionaries to remain and help to form a "Missouri Conference of the M. E. Church;" but I foresaw they must be received or left to suffer, as they had decided not to come under the new organization, and I received them the more readily because the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has a full proportion of missionary work and expense exclusively of the German work. The German missions in Missouri are all comfortably provided for. Those at New Orleans and Mobile we of course took no account of. No English station in Missouri desired recognition at Illinois. None applied except the "same two hundred members" in St. Louis, who requested me in writing through a committee to appoint Brother J. M. Jameson, of the Missouri Conference, as their pastor, which I declined doing, (1) because they, being minority members of several charges, did not come under the rule providing for border stations; (2) because Brother Jameson as a member of the Missouri Conference had not given me authority to appoint him anywhere. If anything can be done consistently for these unfortunate brethren, misled by such as ought to know better, it would be well to

interpose some means for their relief. I do not now see how I can do anything for them.

Brother Wilson S. McMurray, of the Missouri Conference, gave me notice that he desired to remain in the Methodist Episcopal Church and that he wished to hail from the Illinois Conference, and he was received and appointed to a circuit. Brother Crawford, of the Arkansas Conference, was recognized at the Iowa Conference on the same ground and appointed to work there. On the other hand, S. W. D. Chace and N. G. Berryman, of the Illinois Conference, go South, according to Rule 2 of the Plan of Separation. I did not give them regular transfers because I doubted my authority to assign them to any one of the Conferences from which my jurisdiction had been withdrawn; but I did furnish them with a testimonial that they were in good standing and that the Illinois Conference had approved their characters, which, I doubt not, will place them unembarrassed in your hands. Brother N. P. Cunningham, a man of good repute, located with a view, it is said, of reëntering the work in the Missouri Conference this year or next; and, lastly, Dr. J. P. Richmond, who was approved by the Conference and was appointed to the Rushville Circuit, repented and gave notice that he was going South after the Conference adjourned. The notice was unreasonable; but, in view of all circumstances, I concluded to release him from his appointment and let him go, and furnished him with a note to that effect to be used if he desired it on *mature reflection.*

The Illinois Conference passed a series of resolutions going to say that the action of the General Conference on the Plan of Separation was unconstitutional, a nullity, and should not be regarded, etc. One resolution requested the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church to visit Kentucky and Missouri this fall and hold Conferences with the minority preachers, which I promptly informed them would not be done. I did not think it proper to interfere with the free expression of their opinions as a Conference, but reserved the right and expressed the purpose of conforming my administration to the rule of the General Conference in the premises. (The

decrease of members in the Illinois Conference this year is over 2,000. Methodism there is at ebb tide.) These are all the items now remembered which are necessary for me to report in view of the transaction of your business, and I have no wish to inflict anything more upon you, as your time is fully occupied. I have thus far endeavored in all things to observe the rule given us respecting separation, not, however, without some difficulty and even modest hints of a day of reckoning in 1848. In regard to that, however, I am but little concerned.

Disease and death abound to a fearful extent in Illinois this year. I signed the Journal of the Illinois Conference Thursday night at twelve o'clock, traveled sixty miles on Friday, forty on Saturday, and reached St. Louis at 3 P.M. and learned that you had just passed on. I preached yesterday in Centenary Church, and expect to leave by the first boat for Madison, Iowa. I send this hurried scrawl by Brother Snormstide, who can tell you the balance.

Yours with profound respect and sincere affection,

THO. A. MORRIS.

The first General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (being the sixteenth General Conference since the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, in 1784), met in Petersburg, Va., on May 1, 1846. Bishop Andrew not being present and Bishop Soule not having formally given in his adherence to the Church, South, Dr. John Early was elected President *pro tem.* On the second day Bishop Andrew arrived and took the chair. On the same day Bishop Soule sent the following communication to the Conference:

PETERSBURG, May 2, 1846.

Rev. and Dear Brethren: I consider your body, now organized, as the consummation of the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in conformity to the "Plan of Separation" adopted by the General Conference of

the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1844. It is therefore in strict agreement with the provisions of that body that you are vested with full power to transact all business appropriate to a Methodist General Conference.

I view this organization as having been commenced in the "Declaration" of the delegates of the Conferences in the slaveholding States, made at New York in 1844, and as having advanced in its several stages in the "Protest," the "Plan of Separation," the appointment of delegates to the Louisville Convention, in the action of that body, in the subsequent action of the Annual Conferences, approving the acts of their delegates at the convention, and in the appointment of delegates to this General Conference. The organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, being thus completed in the organization of the General Conference with a constitutional president, the time has arrived when it is proper for me to announce my position. Sustaining no relation to one Annual Conference which I did not sustain to every other, and considering the General Conference as the proper judicatory to which my communication should be made. I have declined making this announcement until the present time. And now, acting with strict regard to the "Plan of Separation," and under solemn conviction of duty, I formally declare my adherence to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. And if the Conference receive me in my present relation to the Church, I am ready to serve them according to the best of my ability. In conclusion, I indulge the joyful assurance that, although separated from our Northern brethren by a distinct Conference jurisdiction, we shall never cease to treat them as "brethren beloved" and cultivate those principles and affections which constitute the essential unity of the Church of Christ.

(Signed) JOSHUA SOULE.

To this communication the Conference responded with the following resolution:

Resolved by the delegates of the several Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in General

Conference assembled, That, fully agreeing with Bishop Soule as it regards his right of action in the premises by authority of the General Conference of 1844, we cheerfully and unanimously recognize him as bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, with all the constitutional rights and privileges pertaining to his office as bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

H. B. BASCOM,
WILLIAM WINANS.

And thus was sealed the allegiance to which the logic, the loyalties, and the faith of his life had led. Thus was the Puritan made master in the spiritual house of the Cavalier. Thus was strangely answered for him the question of his boyish heart, when in a pent-up valley of Maine he cried to the birch wolds and the blue horizon far beyond—cried in a language that he himself could not fully interpret: "Shall I ever see those fragrant lands where are the feet of the great Washington, and where the heroes are?" He saw the land of Washington and Jefferson, of Asbury and Jesse Lee—he saw and conquered it through a spirit masterful like the spirits of its greatest and best. And they of that land opened their hearts to him, and in their hearts kept him to the end with an all but idolatrous reverence.

CHAPTER XV.

The Master in Israel.

When the Senior Bishop of Methodism gave in his letter of adherence to the Southern General Conference, he was near the completion of his sixty-fifth year. One of his younger and later colleagues, who, then but a stripling, witnessed the scene and had his eyes riveted on the great ecclesiastic, said of him: "He was very erect, and when he sat down seemed taller than a man of six feet might be. A glance at his face fixed a noble image on my mind, which time cannot erase, and which does not grow older with the years." He was even then a venerable man in everything which that term signifies. And who could have dreamed that there were before him more than a score of years—that he was to outlive most of the leaders of that generation, having already outlived those of another generation? But it was so; he was to go on to see his fourscore years, and then, because the fulfilling days were dark with war and strife, Heaven added yet a lustrum more that his eyes might close in times of tranquillity and peace.

Soon after the adjournment of the General Conference of 1846, Bishop Soule removed his residence from Lebanon, Ohio, where he had lived since 1824, to Nashville, Tenn. A bishop's home, or parsonage, had been provided for him by the wealthy congregation of McKendree Church, assisted by well-to-do Methodist res-

idents in the State, including several ministers of means. The home was located on what is now Sixth Avenue and but a few blocks from the center of the city. Before the coming of the Bishop and the other members of the family from Ohio to their new home, Mrs. Maria Soule Van-Dyke, a widowed daughter, suffering from tuberculosis, visited in the homes of Drs. A. L. P. Green and John B. McFerrin. She was an attractive and accomplished woman, and won in the hearts of the local Church people a large place for the family, in addition to that already preëmpted by the name and fame of her venerable father. Only a year after the settlement of the family in Nashville this daughter died, the first of the circle to find sepulture in the soil that is forever honored in holding the ashes of her sire.

The General Conference of 1846 found little work to do; there was no desire for novelty or change. "The Discipline as it is," was the motto of those days, the spirit of which is good for all generations of Methodists. Changes that do not spring from fundamental needs are likely to work confusion. But the Conference did add to the episcopacy effectively by the election to that office of William Capers and Robert Paine. The senior superintendent continued in infirm health, and, with two young colleagues given him by the Church, was not under the necessity of taking so great a burden of labor as he had carried in the undivided Church; but he was far from remaining inactive, and kept his hand on the helm to be sure that the craft launched under new conditions should be held to the chart of constitutional safety.

A new and serious question arose as early as 1846, even earlier, relating to the adjustment of the stations along the border. It persists to this day. It is very far from my purpose or wish to revive the memory of old resentments or add to those which unfortunately subsist to-day. In my office as biographer I cannot, however, choose but record the facts of this question as they confronted Bishop Soule and his colleagues.

In the summer or early autumn of 1847 a meeting of the bishops was called for Louisville. This was done that the superintendents who had the Ohio River and trans-Mississippi Conferences to hold might be well on their way, and also on their proper dates. Bishops Soule, Andrew, and Paine were at this meeting; but Bishop Capers, through sickness in his family, which delayed him in setting out, and through other causes, was unable to reach the sitting of his colleagues. One of the chief topics discussed at this meeting was the policy of the Southern bishops in dealing with these border matters. The decision readily reached was that they would implicitly observe the Plan of Separation. On this point Bishop Capers, in a letter to Bishop Soule, the unpublished autograph copy of which is before me, said:

> In any event, it does not appear to me (as I have yet been able to see) that it could be consistent for us to send preachers to constitute separate Churches among them, or that such a procedure might be pleasing to God, promotive of true religion, or beneficial to the Church, South. It would imply a persuasion on our part, far from what we really believe, that with the same articles of faith and doctrines of religion to the smallest particular and with the same form of government and discipline there exists cause enough in the naked

part of a difference of opinion about slavery and abolition for the erection of altar against altar in States where the law of the land is not concerned and the question can only be an abstraction. And I am persuaded that very little, if any, of this invasion policy can be pursued without breaking up the foundation principle of itinerancy by introducing a corruption among us that will hold back bishops and Conferences, while Cincinnati, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore City shall put the whole connection under tributes to them and make their electioneering bargains with popular preachers for their most important appointments. I am free to confess that even if the Plan of Separation should be declared null and void by the Northern General Conference of '48 I could not with my present views send a preacher to an interior appointment North without being guilty of schism. We have nothing more to do with them, as I think, but to love them and pray for them. And so if they should send preachers among us it would be altogether wrong. Still as wrong cannot work right, if they should do so, I would not retaliate.

The crucial event of this period was now drawing near—the session of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, to convene in Pittsburg in May, 1848. Deeply desirous of fraternal relations with their brethren in the North, the delegates assembled in the Southern General Conference had appointed Dr. Lovick Pierce to bear to the General Conference at Pittsburg their greetings and overtures of fraternity. Bishop Soule and his colleagues had also prepared an address to be presented by this delegate. And yet another matter was to come before the Pittsburg sitting—namely, the adjustment of the claims of the Church, South, against the Book Concern and the chartered Fund. These matters gave to the Pittsburg General Conference an unusual

importance from the standpoint of the South. The issue is known, and need be put here in the fewest words. The Conferences did not see fit to receive the Southern delegate or to enter into any "fraternization with the Church, South." Moreover, as the Annual Conferences in the North had failed to support a proposition to divide the funds of the Church, the Plan of Separation was declared to be null and void. But since responsible annalists of the Church, North, have characterized this Conference as "radical and revolutionary," no word is necessary from this side. It was the one blunder of the General Conference of 1844, in drafting the Plan of Separation, that it made the division of the Church funds dependent upon a vote of the Annual Conferences. The power of the General Conference to divide the Church was the power to divide its funds; in fact, the dual division was accomplished in one and the same act. The allotting to the South of its part was not an "appropriation" of the funds, and hence did not come under the restrictive rule of the constitution, but was simply a continuance of them to their legal use under changed conditions. The refusal of the Annual Conferences to ratify, had it been made to hold, would have left the Southern Church in the attitude of a secession. It was taken for granted in 1844 that the Annual Conferences even in the North would not hesitate to affirm the action of the general body. Possibly it was historically fortunate that they did not do so. The civil courts later adjudged the case and put the Plan of Separation on the high ground upon which the South claimed it had been created and should stand. There it stands to-day, the generous and just spirit of the Meth-

odism of the North having, long ago, fully and completely accepted it in its original intent.

This brings me to the place where I can pertinently introduce the last of the unpublished papers of Bishop Soule which have been left in my hands. It is one which bears directly on not a few of the points involved in the actions of the General Conference of 1848, and I am sure every student of Methodist history will welcome it as shedding a helpful light on the events of those days:

Having in sincerity and good faith made the proposition for the permanent establishment of a fraternal relation between the two bodies, which proposition has been promptly rejected by the Church, North, it now becomes our duty to pursue our one great work of seeking the salvation of the souls of the people, whether bond or free, committed to our charge, without the auxiliary aid or fraternal intercourse with our Northern brethren, so far as the act of the General Conference can defeat that intercourse. In doing this, fearless of consequences, believing that we are sustained by apostolic authority, leaving the relation of civil society to the secular authorities of the countries to which they lawfully appertain, we will direct and apply our efforts both in our ecclesiastical councils and in the ministry of the gospel of Christ to the one great object of bringing our fellow-men in every relation and condition in life to a "saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus," fully believing that the leaven of our holy Christianity is the safest and surest remedy which we as a branch of the Church of Christ can apply for the prevention or cure of any evils which may exist in society. Earnestly and sincerely as we may desire to fraternize with every evangelical denomination of Christians, and especially with every legitimate branch of the Wesleyan Methodist family both at home and abroad, we should regard such fraternity as purchased at too great a sacrifice if it involved any terms or provisions which might operate as a barrier to our access to the hundreds of thou-

sands of the colored population of the slaveholding States of this confederacy.[1]

While we have such a charge on our hands, and while a great and effectual door of access to this vast and needy population is now open before us, let us not regard it as a matter of momentous account, either that our proposition of fraternal relations should have been rejected or that we should be denounced as a "pro-slavery" Church, and that the design of our organization was to build up and perpetuate the institution of "slavery," especially as we *know assuredly* that these allegations have no foundation in *truth*. All these things may be regarded as "light in the balance" when compared with the success of our missionary labors among the slaves only for the last four years.[2] Let us double our diligence in this our great and truly legitimate work, and leave our Northern friends to *"fight as those that beat the air."* But let us be aware that we do but injure ourselves by "rendering evil for evil" or "railing for railing;" but rather as far as possible let us live peaceably with all men, never forgetting that "he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city," and that "a soft answer turneth away wrath."

The General Conference of 1846 by resolution requested Bishop Soule to write the life of his great colleague, Bishop McKendree, and it would seem that he at one time meditated entering upon that task; but it was never undertaken, and the honor finally fell to his younger colleague, Bishop Paine, whose two-volumed biography of McKendree appeared several years after Bishop Soule's death.

I have already spoken of the visit of Dr. Dixon, the

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[1]This refers to the Federal republic, and not the Confederacy of 1861-65.

[2]This fixes the date of the paper—1850, "four years" from 1846, the date of the first Southern General Conference.

fraternal delegate from England to the General Conference in the North, and of his attachment to and his enthusiastic admiration for Bishop Soule. Touching the Bishop's adherence to the South, this brilliant preacher and Church statesman wrote in a volume of American reminiscences, published in 1849, as follows:

> He entered fully into the subject of his connection with the South, saying he supposed we would be surprised at the event. He avowed that he acted from the dictates of his conscience, believing that he should be best enabled in the section of the Church he had chosen to advance the interests of his Master's kingdom. Everybody who knows Bishop Soule must receive this testimony. He is incapable of equivocation or of anything dishonorable. He avowed that his convictions of the evil of slavery had undergone no change; it was as much the object of his abhorrence as ever. His explanations of his conduct amounted to this: that, in his opinion, the only possible way of ever reaching a measure of emancipation lay in bringing the population of the South, masters and slaves, under the influence of the gospel; and that the only means of accomplishing this was not in agitating the question but in quietly preaching the truth to both, leaving it in the providence of God to work its own results; moreover, that for ministers to agitate the question of emancipation would infallibly cause the planters of the South to shut the door against all attempts at evangelization, and have the effect of leaving masters and servants in their sins.

After residing some years in the bishop's home at Nashville, Bishop Soule purchased a farm some miles from Franklin, about two hours' drive by carriage from Nashville. The estate consisted of fifty acres, with a substantial manor or farmhouse. Here the Bishop lived during a period of marked infirmity, the General Conference having left it to his discretion as to the nature and extent of the labors he was to perform. In

an outdoor life, looking to the care of his meadows and the cultivation of his crofts and garden, he experienced great benefit and in a measure recovered the strength he was to need so much in the trying years before him.

Dr. William M. Green, a son of Dr. A. L. P. Green, himself now one of the veterans of the Tennessee Conference, has recited to me not a few of the interesting incidents of this period of the Bishop's life. He recalls vividly having, about the year 1850, driven Bishop Capers from his father's suburban residence to Bishop Soule's home, in Williamson County. The entire day was spent in the company of Bishop Soule and his wife. Dr. Green, though then but a youth and unfamiliar with the wider reach of Church affairs, recalls that the two Bishops spent most of the time discussing the division of the Church, the unsettled claims of the South, and the growth of an unfraternal sentiment over the events then but recently passed. Bishop Soule read to Bishop Capers an article or paper which he had written on the subject, to which the latter gave the closest attention. Mrs. Soule, coming in near the close of the reading, expressed the greatest sorrow at the condition of the Church, but both she and the Bishop were in the fullest accord with the attitude of the Methodism of the South. It is of more than passing interest here to mention that I have, after comparison of dates and facts, become convinced that the paper which Dr. Green heard the Bishop read in his home is none other than the one which appears on page 263 of this biography. It was doubtless meant to be published in some one or other of the Church journals or read at a public meet-

ing or possibly to be used as a pastoral to the preachers of the connection, but, clearly, was never used in either way. However, that the paper represented the generous Christian sentiments of the aged Bishop's heart there can never be a question.

The General Conference of 1850 added Rev. Dr. Henry B. Bascom to the College of Bishops; but that brilliant preacher and astute Church statesman was not long spared to Methodism. He died suddenly on September 8, 1850, but a few months after his consecration to the episcopacy. To Bishop Bascom the Methodism of the South owed the masterful Church papers presented in its defense in 1844 and the equally great paper which served as the basis of procedure in the Louisville Convention. At the consecration of Bishop Bascom the Senior Bishop was only able to totter to his feet and lay his venerable hands upon the princely head of his newest colleague; but when, in 1854, the General Conference called to the bishopric that immortal trio, Pierce, Early, and Kavanaugh, he found himself possessed again of so much of his old strength as to be able to take the leading part in their ordination. It was at this time that, a longing having taken possession of his heart to revisit the scenes of his youth and join in a reunion of the remaining members of his father's family, he requested leave of the General Conference to be absent on the pilgrimage. To this request the Conference answered with a hearty and affectionate concurrence and ordered the Agents of the Church to place at his disposal the necessary funds for his expenses. It was characteristic of this master in Israel, this prince amongst rulers, that he did nothing without

authorization. He who made the law and exacted fealty to it from others gave fealty in the full measure of a loyal and obedient mind. In 1844, when an academic honor was offered him from Europe, he laid the offer before the General Conference and asked permission before he would ever treat in the matter. The half of his nature lay along the sunny levels of gentleness, and from these the rugged highlands of his mastery took breath and color.

As late as 1853, though called a superannuate, he felt able to undertake the episcopal care of the Conference on the Pacific Coast, and made the long voyage by way of Panama. This voyage was repeated in 1854. While in California he preached constantly, Sundays and secular days, and visited in every part of the State where the Church had stations. He was the first of our bishops to set foot on the Golden Shore. On his first visit he spent six months, and was during that time the recipient of many attentions, the Governor of the State making him his guest while at the capital. It was the successful accomplishment of this journey that led him to think of a pilgrimage to the shrines and associations of his childhood. By 1855 he was deemed again too much enfeebled to take any share of the episcopal visitations. For the years 1855 and 1856 no appointment was assigned him other than to visit the Tennessee Conference in company with one of his colleagues; but in 1857 and 1858 not even this formality was laid upon him. He was thenceforward the patriarch from whom none would take a sign of his office, nor yet of him exact a single requirement, but to whom all rendered unfeigned obeisance of heart. He had given up home and

kindred and honors for the people of the South. They gave him in return—themselves.

Some time near the beginning of the year 1855 the Bishop established his residence on the Gallatin Pike, about seven miles from Nashville. The place was opposite the now famous City Road Chapel, and consisted of meadows, an orchard, a garden, and a few acres under tillage. The farmhouse was a modest but most cozy and restful place, and there the venerable man indulged to the fullest extent his love of reading and gardening. The years of his retirement, aside from what were given to worship, his family, and his friends, were divided between his library and the plants and flowers of his garden. He was an omnivorous reader, and his tastes in literature were catholic and classic. I should judge him to be the most rounded self-made scholar of his century.

On the Gallatin Pike farm he spent the remnant of his days, saving the last few months, which were spent in the city of Nashville. On May 27, 1857, his wife—a woman who through fifty-four years of life proved herself to be worthy of so great a husband—entered into rest and was laid beside the daughter who had gone ten years before. Strong, courageous, and confident of the future though he was, "he refused to take a poetic or romantic view of death." He was deeply moved at separation from the companion of his life and heart. Loyally and affectionately they had walked together. No lack of faith had ever estranged their thoughts. It was with the choking grief of a lover that he saw the dust take back its own.

The session of the famous General Conference of

1858, which was held in the Hall of Representatives of the Tennessee Capitol, found him a superannuate in all but the completest sense; and yet he was able to be in constant attendance upon its sittings. In that justly extolled work of art, the steel engraving by Buttre, of New York, which shows the Conference of 1858 in one of its sittings, his majestic face and form assert a silent primacy over that assembly of leaders. He was asked by resolution of the Conference to preach at some hour during the session when his strength would seem to admit of the necessary physical exertion. This he agreed to do, but I find no indication in the Journal that he was ever able to fulfill his promise. The benediction of his presence was to his brethren more eloquent and effective than any sermon could have been. His life had been a sermon that called through all men's hearts.

The session of the Tennessee Conference which met at Athens, Ala., in October, 1861, was, excepting the Tennessee sitting at Edgefield in 1865, at which he was present only brief whiles, the last regular session of an Annual Conference attended by Bishop Soule. Bishop John Early was presiding, and his venerable colleague was present the entire time as a visitor only. Rev. Thomas L. Moody, now a veteran of the Conference, was then an undergraduate and also present. Recalling the scenes of the session, he says: "The reverence shown Bishop Soule by the Conference was a continual wonder to me. When it appeared that he wished to speak, all was attention, and amid silence the entire body seemed to lean forward to catch each word. On account of age and feebleness, he remained seated while speaking. He sat all the while very erect in his

chair on the rostrum. His presence commanded attention even when he kept silence."

After a dozen years of rest and quiet in his modest manor, swept round by meadows, swathed with blue grass and clover, there came upon the land a crash of thunders and a tempest of strife, with an intermittent rain of blood. In the War between the States the capital was early occupied by the Federal troops. In this way the Bishop was completely cut off from communication with his colleagues, and was much of the time without information concerning the welfare of the Church at large. The General Conference which should have held its session in 1862, was, through stress of war, prevented from assembling. The land was filled with alarms and with marching and countermarching armies. In the midst of it all the octogenarian Bishop lived on, unmoved and unterrified. Long indeed had strife's abortive cry assailed his ears—too long for him to fear, far too long for him to doubt the pledge of the Voice that hushes all. He did not take the oath of allegiance to either the North or the South; no man ever required it of him. Into the sanctity of the chamber where he sat with his books, nor yet upon the miniature demesne of meadows and garden plats over which his revered shadow fell, dared no man to come asking: "Whose servant art thou?" With politics he had never entangled himself. In his judgment the Church should eschew partisanship or alliances of any sort with secular cabals. So careful was he in these matters that for a long time even the members of his own family could not locate his sympathies in the war then raging about them. It was only through a

single remark made after one of the great battles of the sixties had been fought that he betrayed his preference for the arms of the South.

During the Federal occupation of Nashville and near the beginning of the fourth year of the war Bishop Soule called a conference of such of the preachers as were within reach to meet at City Road Chapel, the church near his home. The occasion of the call was this: No bishop had been able to visit the Conferences in Tennessee for more than two years past. At the session held at Cornersville in 1862 a number of itinerants had been elected to deacon's and elder's orders, and they now desired Bishop Soule to ordain them. To attend to these offices and to give such pastoral advice as he could, he summoned them to an interview. At this time an article appeared in a Nashville daily paper edited under Federal censorship virulently attacking Bishop Soule and styling his ordination meeting a "Grayback Conference," referring to the gray uniforms of the Confederate troops. Grand, suffering old man! God permitted him to live to see the Church once "peeled and scattered and meted out" prepare to renew its youth and recover its wasted heritage. And if it is granted him to look down from the towers of the distant spiritual city where they have crowned him, he sees to-day, in the millions who worship at the altars he loved, a vision that helps to gladden his triumphant soul.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Evening Bell.

When the days of peace came, following the carnage and iron mandates of war, they found the man of God where he had always been—with his feet on the earth, but his head high in the heavens of faith and vision. The little manor in the heart of the blue grass lands of Middle Tennessee had been a magnet to many thousands of hearts during the dark days of war. Now it became a shrine to which the feet of many reverently and gratefully turned and to which helpful tokens out of the poverty of a people once rich found their way. The writer of this biography, though of tender years, recalls that the name of Bishop Soule was a sound that helped, in those first years after strife, to conjure back the hopes of those who turned again, each in his way, to rebuild the walls of Zion; nor can he ever forget the pall of mourning spread over the heritage of the people called Methodists in these ends of the continent when the tidings of his death were published. A smothered cry along the re-forming ranks of the host was heard: "He is gone! Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth. Who is left that can lift the spear or bend the bow which he has laid down?"

But there remain yet other words of this testimony, and these I must record before my task is done.

The three years that fell to Bishop Soule after the cessation of war had restored to him the children of his

spiritual patriarchate were a season of ripening in spiritual grace and of flourishing in intellectual alertness. He did not begin to die at the top, but his mentality flourished in a youth like the eagle's.

It is the testimony of all that his conversational powers were most unusual. Wit and humor flashed through his speech like the noiseless pulsings of sheet lightnings through the cumulus clouds of summer. His thick, overshadowing brows gave majesty to the look of his great, deep eyes, and actually seemed at times to cast meaningful shadows into their depths as overhanging cliffs mirror themselves in placid lakes. So marked, so impressive were his features, and so much did they grapple with those who heard him in public speech or conversation, that an adept might have drawn them in absence after a single study.

In conversation he was always genial, but never running into levity either of thought or speech. His dignity was the antithesis of austerity. He more frequently said "sir" than "brother," though never beat a more fraternal heart than his. He shone as the sun of every company in which he was placed, and in its sinking that sun shone brightest. "In company with a friend," says Bishop McTyeire, "I called on him during the last months of his life. He received us in his usual bland and courtly and affectionate way. Our inquiries after his health were answered by quoting in his finest style from Ecclesiastes, 'The keepers of the house do tremble, and the strong men bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows are darkened;' then, touching his trembling hand to his head: 'You see, brethren, the almond

tree flourishes.' On our leaving, and prayer being proposed, we intimated that he should remain seated. 'No; let me get to my knees'—and, one on each side, we helped him down and up."

The home life of Bishop Soule, like his life in the Church and before the public, was one of faith. It is remembered by the reader that in the early years of his itinerancy he was much of the time a stranger to his own household. His long journeys as circuit rider or presiding elder through the wilderness reaches of Maine kept him often so long from home that on returning the younger children did not recognize him. More than once he found in the cradle a babe whom he had not before seen. And yet, through faith and patience of the Spirit, husband and wife made home a temple of love and joy. Who shall write the life of that mother and wife? It is written in his; in the record which he has left for American Methodism they twain are one.

Eleven children were born to Joshua and Jane Allen Soule—namely, Marian, Joshua, Amiba, Jane, Ernestine, James, Joseph A., Sarah, William McKendree, Martha, and George. The first was born in 1804, and the last in 1824. Martha and William McKendree were twins. These children have all long since been gathered to their parents in death, and, so far as I can learn, only three grandchildren survive. These are: Prof. E. S. Clark, superintendent of the public schools of Henderson, Ky., a gentleman of fine talents and high character, a son of Jane Soule Clark, the Bishop's third daughter; the other two are Mrs. Haden, wife of the Rev. T. H. Haden, of our Japan Mission, and Miss

Florence Conwell, the "sister superior" of Wesley Hall, gratefully remembered by very many of the young preachers of Methodism who have received their theological training in that hospitable school of the prophets. These ladies are the daughters of Martha Soule Conwell, twin sister of William McKendree Soule. Their father, Dr. Conwell, was at one time a popular and successful practitioner in Nashville, but died a score or more years ago.

From 1808, the year of the meeting of the first delegated General Conference, to 1854 Bishop Soule was never absent from any sitting of the general body. But when the ever-memorable General Conference of 1866 met in New Orleans, he was absent, being, though still in the body, too feeble to take the long journey from his Tennessee home. On the second day of the session Dr. John B. McFerrin presented a communication from the Bishop conveying his salutations and blessings, whereupon the Conference passed a resolution of response which was entered upon the Journal, as follows:

Resolved, That the General Conference has received with deep emotion the communication from the Rev. Bishop Soule through Dr. McFerrin, and rejoices to know that he is still sustained and comforted by the consolations of our holy religion which he has so long lived to preach and to exemplify in his useful and honored life, and that this Conference tenders to our beloved Senior Bishop its kindest sympathies and prefers for him its warmest prayers.

Ten days later the Journal contained another and sadder record:

Special prayers were offered for the venerable Bishop Soule,

Bishop Pierce having announced the receipt of the following telegram: "Bishop Soule very ill—can live but a few days." An announcement which was received by the Conference with great emotion.

It seemed a fitting time for the great man to depart, but the hour of his crossing over was to be delayed for nearly one full year. He was to be permitted to have rehearsed to him, and himself to ponder, all the things done by his sons in the gospel in their great moot after the cataclysm of war. That he so weighed and considered their work and that he approved it is known. Especially would he be gratified at the fact that his own wing of the Church had been the first in Episcopal Methodism to recognize the parity of laymen in the lawmaking assembly. As far back as 1820 he had expressed to Bishop McKendree his friendliness toward any reasonable reform in the Church that might be brought about constitutionally. Although by nature a leader and by opportunity a lawgiver, he was in all and through all a commoner. One of his strong appeals against the hurtful and reactionary legislation of 1824 was: "Will the people indorse it?" He fully satisfied himself that the great bulk of the laity supported his position. The ripeness of time having brought lay representation, he could rejoice in it with the rest.

The General Conference of 1866 called four new members to the episcopacy—namely, William May Wightman, Enoch Mather Marvin, David Seth Doggett, and Holland Nimmons McTyeire. These names bring us to the beginning days of this generation of Methodists. The youngest of these became, as far as could be, the successor of his reverenced senior. With

a mind bent toward law and government, with a profound reverence for the constitution and the ideals of Methodism, Bishop McTyeire was marked as the man who was to replace to his generation the services of the great rabbi whose days were near their final ebb. Fortune planned that they should be closely associated during the closing scenes. As a son to his father, the younger Bishop watched, communed with, and set himself to obey the dying behests of his elder. It was his to witness the letter of translation, and his to speak the words of eulogy and memory above the dust entombed. As the mantle of McKendree had fallen upon Soule, so the mantle of Soule fell upon McTyeire. Having himself defended and cherished the book of the law, he gave it into the hands of a worthy champion. It remains yet for a reproach to be visited upon that book in the house of that Methodism to which the illustrious Soule adhered.

With the opening of a new quadrennium he sent a message to his colleagues: "Push forward the great work." He saw the fruitful, prophetic future before his people. The vision of it mingled with the light of his own translation.

The bleak winds of March in Tennessee were moaning through the leafless maples and heeling up the sere pasture lands when the summons came to the long-waiting saint. On March 2, 1867, he was attacked with dysentery. This was Saturday, and on Tuesday he began to sink rapidly; it was plain that the end had come. Of this he himself seemed certain, and constantly asked the hour. This was read to him from the large silver watch that hung at the head of his bed, and which he

had so long worn that it was all but identified with his person.

"Do you feel any pain, Bishop?" asked his colleague, Bishop McTyeire. "None at all," was the quiet reply. But the question being renewed near the turn of the night, the answer was: "A little—not much." Just before midnight, seeing imminent signs of dissolution, his colleague asked: "Bishop, you have long preached the gospel to others; is all now clear before you?" The answer was in low but confident tones: "Yes, yes."

This being a characteristic form of reply with him, the younger bishop supposed his question was not fully understood, and so asked: "Do you understand me, Bishop?" "I do, sir," was the reply, which left no room for doubt.

The remainder of the story may best be given in Bishop McTyeire's own words:

About one o'clock he seemed to be passing under the cloud and disappearing. I said: "Is all right still?" Then for the last time did he throw that peculiar emphasis upon his words: "All right, sir; all right."

At intervals we gave him water, which he swallowed with an appearance of thirst. Soon after drinking it, about two o'clock, when his voice, though feeble, was distinct, seeing him cross his hands on his breast, I asked: "Are you praying?" He replied, "Not now," and never spake more.

I was surprised at these words; they were not what I expected, for I knew he understood me and meant what he said. But as I looked at him lying there and thought on the words, "not now," they began to appear right, very right. His work was done; the night had come when no man can work. He was quiescent. The servant who has loitered away the day begins to be very busy when the shadows lengthen. There is

such a thing as having nothing to do but to die. Woe to the man who has his praying to do and his dying at the same time! He that believeth shall not make haste. Not praying now; that was done with, and the time for praising would soon set in. Like a ship, brave and stanch, that has weathered the storms and buffeted the waves, the voyage is ended; and as it nears the land, the busy wheels cease their revolutions, and under the headway and momentum previously acquired it glides into port.

The change came. The family were called in and stood around as the silver cord was loosed without a struggle or groan or the appearance of any pain. He had put off this tabernacle! Absent from the body, present with the Lord!

The first interment of Bishop Soule's remains was in the old City Cemetery, famous as the sleeping place of the founders and first fathers of the Athens of the South. There his dust rested amongst kindred urns for a period of ten years, when, by request of Church officials and the consent of his family, it, together with the dust of Bishop McKendree, which had reposed for forty years in a grave in Sumner County, was removed to a sepulture provided upon the campus of the Vanderbilt University. The spot is one of the most restful that can be imagined. It lies swarded in blue grass and red clover under the shadows of fragrant trees planted a third of a century ago by the hand of a colleague. About it, but at silence-conserving distances, rise the classic buildings of the University, glimpsed through the foliage. But a few paces away is the school of the prophets. It was on a glorious day of October, in the year 1876, that this soil was opened and the ashes of the two fathers of the Church were lowered by reverent hands to a rest that they will doubt-

less keep until the trump of the archangel shall proclaim "the resurrection of the body." The bells in the twin towers of the old University building tolled a solemn requiem as the funereal act proceeded. At the ceremony of the spreading of superficial dust, and amid a silence of nature's making, the bells having ceased their solemn monodies, Bishop McTyeire delivered a touching and eloquent eulogy on the great leaders of the Church, who, being knit together as one soul in life, were now to finish together their sleep of death. The modern city has stretched out its living arms and embraced the once suburban campus. With roar of wheels and tramp of feet, an urban life now sweeps miles beyond the protecting walls, but the quiet of their resting place is as it was at the beginning these four and thirty years ago. "Here sleep, side by side, the Cavalier and the Puritan—one in Christ."

Subsequent to the reinterment of the remains of the two bishops, a monument of South Carolina granite in the shape of a massive pulpit surmounted by a Bible and hymn book was erected over the spot. On February 15, 1889, Bishop McTyeire was himself called from earthly labors, and was given sepulture with the two mighty ones whose deeds and faith he had extolled in his strength. McKendree, Soule, McTyeire—these are the links that carry the chain of our spiritual heredity back to Asbury.

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